Tiruvalluvar and His Tirukkural

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Tiruvalluvar and His Tirukkural

By

Ka Naa Subramanyam

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Foreword

Bharatiya Jnanpith is India's premier literary and cultural institute which for the last over forty years has been engaged in the promotion of researches in Indian classics, encouraging growth of contemporary writing by reputed as well as young writers on non-commercial basis, presenting an integrated view of Indian literature through its annual literary award of Rs. 1,50,000 for best creative writings in Indian languages and providing a forum for the Indian writers to discuss literary problems in the present-day social context, through seminars and publication of anthologies etc.

It is gratifying to note that the founders of Jnanpith, Shri Shanti Prasad Jain and Shrimati Rama Jain, with the help of eminent scholars like Dr. Hiralal Jain, Dr. A. N. Upadhye and Prof A. Chakravarti Nayanar of Indian Education Service, Madras, concentrated, as a first step in 1944, on retrieving the ancient Kannad and Tamil palm-leaf manuscripts from the oblivion of dingy Śāstra Bhaṇḍāras in the South. The wealth of Kannada Manuscripts on palm leaves at Moodbidri (South Karnataka) revealed the existence of a massive ancient Prakrit text known as *Saṭkhaṇḍāgama*, a part of which has been published by Bharatiya Jnanpith in eight volumes. It is interesting to note that even before the publication of this Prakrit text in Kannada Script, Jnanpith had published Tírukkural in Tamil, as edited by Prof A. Chakravarti, with a Tamil commentary of great historical and philosophical value.

Jnanpith is now able to publish a book on *Tirukkural* in English by the distinguished writer, Shri Ka Naa Subramanyam, whose range of writings is wide, be it Tamil or English and whose critical evaluations are acknowledged as candid and honestly objective. Scores of editions of *Kural* have appeared over the years, from 1868 onward, and dozens of commentaries and assessments of this classic have brought fresh laurels to

authors, and yet the work, already famed as the Tamil Veda, presents new facets of insight which keep on alluring emerging generations of scholors.

Shri Subramanyam's purpose in writing the study of *Kural* has been to convey his conviction, born of a lifelong study of the text, that the main theme of *Kural* is to propound ethical values for all mankind of all ages to give meaning to life and enrich social living for peace, harmony and collective welfare. *Ahiṁsā* (Non-Violence) is the cornerstone of all these teachings and values. *Dharma* (Righteousness) is the name given to these values.

Tamil culture portrayed in Tirukkural is securely based on these two principles—Non-violance and a casteless society as the foundation of the socio-economic structure.

Jainism alone brings out the quintessence of *Kural's* ethical values in a perspective that has a history from the days of the First Tīrthaṅkara, Ādinātha Bhagawān or Ṛṣabha Deva. In the very first verse or kural of the text occurs the word Ādi Bhagawān. The next nine verses relate to the insignia and virtues of Tirthaṅkara Ādinātha, as Arahanta, the enlightened one, and as Siddha Parmeṣthin-the liberated soul. There is a reference to the holy feet of the Tīrthaṅkara which are like a ferry taking the soul across the ocean of Saṁsāra—the cycle of births and deaths. The words 'rāgā' and 'dveṣa'—attachment and aversion, are used to denote that the Lord is free from these twin impurities which result in the bondage of the soul with *Karmas*. Dharma Cakra, the wheel of Law, is the symbol of the Tīrthaṅkara's authority to impart teachings of righteousness. Liberated soul or Siddha is depicted to possess eight virtues after consuming the two sets of *Karmas—ghātiyā* and *aghatiyā* in the fire of penance. The Lord's pathway is far above the earth as laid out by the *Devas*, divine beings, who make lotuses bloom under his feet. All this description is a very special part and parcel of the Jaina lore. However elaborate be the commentaries on *Kural* written by adherents of Vedic, Buddhist or Christian faiths they cannot adequately explain the signficance of all the imagery, similes and textual allusions without the help of the Jaina ethos. Ācārya Mānatuṅga who authored one of the most popular prayers, Bhaktāmara stotra or Ādinātha stotra, in 6th c. A. D. seems to have drawn his

inspiration from these ten verses of the first chapter of *Kural* because the first two verses of the *stotra* echo the same thoughts and sentiments almost phrase by phrase.

That the author of *Kural*, saint Tiruvalluvar, a disciple of Acārya Kundakunda, if not Kundakunda himself, was a Jaina who flourished sometime between 1st c.B.C. and 1st c A.D. and that his passionate advocacy of *Ahiṁsā* as a way of life are points that have been established beyond any shadow of doubt by Prof. Chakravarti in his edition of the *Kural* so freely quoted by Shri Ka Naa Subramanyam.

The author of this study has his own views about the period when *Kural* was written. His researches lead him to believe that there was a meeting and exchange of views between Tiruvalluvar and St. Thomas at Mylapore, the birth place of the former. In fact Shri Subramanyam has written a novel on this topic the publication of which is awaited eagerly by the Tamil world.

Bharatiya Jnanpith is grateful to Shri Ka Naa Subramanyam for placing his manuscript at the disposal of Jnanpith for publication. Shri Subramanyam's style of English carries his own individual imprint. At times I felt like making some verbal alterations to clarify the sense or bring the construction to a grammatical pattern of my perception, but I have refrained from doing this lest I should mar the uniqueness of his syntax.

Of the four Purṣārthas—man's endeavours—*Dharma* (Righteousness), *Artha* (Wealth), *Kāma* (Love or Sex) and *Mokṣa* (Liberation), only the first three are dealt with by the author of *Tirukkural*. The book being a householder's *Veda* or Bible, the attainment of *Mokṣa* has been left out of its ambit, the domain of the ascetics, though that remains the ultimate goal of life. The study of *Kural* by some early Christian authors presented a ticklish problem for their prudery when they found that the Third Book dealing with the topic of Love describes the process of courting as well as psychological and emotional phenomena leading to mating. This chapter is no counterpart of Kāmaśāstra of Vātsyāyana. It was Colonel Ellis who, to quote Prof. Chakravarti, 'was able to see the purity of author's atmosphere prevalent in the whole section on domestic happiness based on pure love'.

We are indebted to Dr. V.I. Subramoniam, former Vice-

Chanceller, Tamil University, Tanjore, who is a scholar of Dravidian Linguistic Studies and whose researches have won international recognition, for finding time to write an introduction to this book. It has added weight to Ka Naa's approach and, perhaps, conclusions.

The publication of this book has been possible through the financial help rendered by Beneett, Coleman & Co. Ltd., Bombay to whom we are indebted.

So much heat has already been generated among scholars for decades regarding the aurhorsnip and religious espousal of *Kural* that a contribution like the present one is likely to shed new light of conviction rather than to stoke the old embers of controversy.

We can only pray with Prof. Chakravarti :

'Jainaṁ Jayatu Śāsanam'

'जैनं जयतु शासनम्'

Let the rule of righteousness of the Jina prevail.

Bharatiya Jnanpith
New Delhi
25 Dec. 1986

—*Lakshami Chandra Jain*

Introduction

The book *Tiruvalluvar and His Tirukkural* by Ka Naa Subramanyam is a refreshing reading. The author is a well known critic who is outspoken in his comments on contemporary and old literature in Tamil. His style of presentation is most pleasing. Even when the author has to cite authorities and summarise their findings as is very often resorted to by researchers, he has simplified his presentation.

He sets out a major goal of assigning the work, *Tirukkural*, as a Jain work. As a concomitant goal, he wants to present the Tamil poet to the world at large which has not yet known the value of the work, except by a few, like the Noble Prize Winner Schweitzer. In both he has succeeded to a large measure.

Besides the folk religion, which still survives in the villages and even in the urban areas, Jainism to a great extent and Buddhism to a smaller extent held sway over the kings and the upper castes in early Tamilnadu. Side by side, Vedic Hinduism was also practised by kings though to a lesser degree in the early days, Later when the temple building was a recognised activity of a king, Hinduism replaced the non-Vedic religions. But the folk religion still continues in Tamilnadu. The myth that Gnanasambandha, the Bhakthi poet, destroyed the hold of Jainism in Tamilnadu through a contest is only partially true. Even in the beginning of the twentieth century, robed Jain monks maintained temples even in my native village, Nagercoil. The land grant to Jain monastries and temples called 'pallicandam' continued upto the 13th c.A.D. Later the Hindus began to worship the deity as their deity because by the middle twenties, the Jain commoner has also become a Hindu, the minority merging with the majority when the Jain monastic order in the South was weak and the Jain population also declined in number due to migration and conversion of the unobtrusive type. In Kerala no concerted effort was made to convert the Jains, but the sway of Brahminic influence was strong on the kings who followed it assiduously. The non-Vedic religions like Jainism

and Buddhism faded, Besides external forces, the internal causes of dissension resulting in sub-sect formation etc. are the causes for the Jains in Tamilnadu to become pockets of minorities in Tanjore, South Arcot and Chingelpet. In other parts, the Jain vestiges are still found. Their temples have become those of the Hindus, but the offerings to the deities will reveal the non-Vedic practices once followed in the temples. These apart, the internal evidences of *Tirukkural* emphasising on non-killing, non-flesh eating etc. as has been pointed out by Mr. Chakravarti Nainar and others will indicate that the *Kural* is a Jain work. Whether the author of that work was Kundakundācārya of Elara or Tiruvalluvar we may not bother now. The internal evidence is sufficient to say that the work has absorbed the Jain moral tenets. Any dispute on this will not stand the test of time.

One question which has been troubling all researchers is about the third chapter of this work, *Kaamattuppaal*, where the love life which is the *akam* tradition of the early Tamils is well preserved. Jain works do not lay emphasis on the premarital love and its consequences. Indeed they are superbly presented by *Kural*, For a morally knit family, love based marriage might have been felt by the author as necessary. Or the *Kural* might have divided life into moral phase, state craft and love life. This is more like the *Saṅgam* division which is continued in the *Kural*. The equality of woman is less said in *Kural*. She as a loving wife, good mother is portrayed. Other than that, her place as a religious leader, her equality with man are not explicit in the *Kural*. The social and political conditions of early Tamilnadu, perhaps, did not necessitate any explicit statement.

No doubt by content and presentation, the *Kural* is one of the outstanding examples of a classic which cannot be neglected by the world. Ka Naa Subramanyam through his absorbing presentation has done a job which will be gratefully remembered by the cannoisures of literature.

The Jnanpith which has taken a most constructive step of awarding the prestigeous Jnanapith Award to the best creative literature in modern Indian languages is also contributing to the growth of research in Indology. The enormous contribution of the Jains to Tamil is little known in India. I am glad that this book of Ka Naa Subramanyan is published by this institution.

—*V.I. Subramaniam*

Preface

I was throughout my school and college days an indifferent student of Sanskrit. So that, when, after a spell of writing in English, I came to write in Tamil in the mid thirties, I was quite an ignoramus regarding the Tamil classics. I began, or came to, the study of Tamil classics, from the modern to the old, by way of Subramania Bharati, going back little by little to the ancients. It has been a fascinating study interesting in quite a few aspects, a study that I do not expect to be over even on the day I die. Like the Jainas, I would believe in another life to complete the study of the Tamil literary classics.

The study of the *Kural* was, particularly, fascinating for two reasons. One, the exaggerated lip service that the Tamils pay to the book, without having done any critical work of an impressive kind on it; and two, it is one of the works of moral propaganda which succeeds also as a great literary work. In spite of the growing beliefs in committed writers in modern times, it is a fact of literary history that most committed writers are flops, easily found out in their puny efforts.

Leo Tolstoy is an obvious modern exception, and Tiruvalluvar, to my mind, was an ancient exception, perhaps one among ten confessedly great moralist writers who transmuted their moralities into literature.

My first reading of the *Kural* gave me the idea that only about a fifth of the work was great as poetry. I have, since other sequent readings, changed my opinion and now hold that a fifth might be neglected, but four fifths can be considered great as poetry. Even the reservations about the one fifth as not up to mark might disappear with subsequent acquaintance.

I amused myself, trying to extricate the 'complexities' of the *Kural* text, from the expectations of learned commentators. Ignoring commentators, a learned breed to say the least but quite uncomfortable for me, I tried to get at the significance of the *Kural* as the poet meant it, simply in its terse context and in its pro verbial phrasings. As a result, it was a delightful exercise

to undertake a translation of it for my own purposes, which I did, a decade ago, in prose, in proverbial maxim-like form.

The insistance on an overall sense of not harming others, hurting no one and the stress on non-violence and *ahiṁsā* and on the nobility of the ascetic orders and the like, apart from the opinions of scholars like S. Vaiyapuri Pillai whom I have often followed as to chronology and opinions, gave me the conviction that the poet of the *Kural* was a Jaina by profession, by birth perhaps, or by conviction. And I have a feeling that, with Tamil scholars, we are in an airy-fairy field where religious prejudices rather than impartial judgements confirm most literary opinions. The neglect of the Jaina contribution to the *Saṅgam* poems which I consider considerably more than is normally conceded as well as a growing conviction about the original status of the Tamil language emerging from its dialectual status to literary levels, was a matter of protest by the Jainas trying to work away from the literary ideals of the day as represented by Sanskritists; all this is a matter of speculation and not as yet of actual proof.

Under these circumstances Shri L. C. Jain, Advisor, Bharatiya Jnanpith, provided me an opportunity to express my faith in Valluvar, his advocacy on *Ahiṁsā* in day-to-day life of the people, and his social and human outlook.

Feeling my way through the various chapters and quoting them again and again to myself, the universal morality that the *Kural* poet declares seemed more and more to be Jaina than anything else. Prof. A. Chakravarti's conclusions about the identification of the author of the *Kural* as Śrī Kundakunda Ācārya and of the Ācārya's disciple who was a little known ruler from Conjeepuram, named Śiva Kumāra Mahārāja might be far fetched, but there is nothing actually improbable, or unlikely, about his findings. The Jaina tradition seems to go back many centuries. And add to all this the fact that it is mostly the Jaina works in the Tamil language that quote from this work *in extenso* often claiming the *Kural* as a Jaina work, and that you have more than a certainty about Tiruvalluvar being a Jaina.

I have quoted extensively from Chakravarti's Introduction and other critical essays, but I have a feeling that more would serve the cause of the *Kural* than sectarian views about North or South, or Tamil, or Sanskrit. Tiruvalluvar was as a poet and moralist, aiming at an universal statement of certain eternal

truths which came to him perhaps by virtue of his Jainism. But the *Kural* is certainly more than a book by a narrow, or any way, bigotted partisan of any religion or sect; it is as vast as love, and as wide as the seas, and as high as the heavens. That is the greatest charm of the book which remains an ancient text but as modern as a modern would like it to be.

The *Kural* has something to say to every man, both as poet and as wisdom, and every one born a human being can profit by it. That is the great validity of some of the noblest moral texts of the world. And the *Kural* is one of the noblest of the moral texts available to the world, though the greater part of the globe is still unaware of it, as it has not been presented in the world context with sufficient critical insight.

New Delhi —*Ka Naa Subramanyam*
Tamil New Year Day, 1986

Acknowledgement

In finalizing this study of the author of the *Kural* as a Jaina I was considerably helped by Dr. S.C. Jain and Dr. Gulab Chandra Jain, Research Department, Bharatiya Jnanpith, which I acknowledge with thanks. I also acknowledge the assistance given by Dr. (Mrs.) Vasavadatta Pandey, a scholar of Tamil and Hindi, regarding clarification of certain texts of the *Kural* in the light of Jaina ethics. The form and the imperfections of this study as it stands now are wholly mine.

I have quoted *in extenso* from the works of Prof. A. Chakravarti both as regards the *Kural* and other Jaina works. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to his executors and his publishers who have given me permission to quote freely.

I am happy that Shri Sahu Shriyans Prasad Jain, President, and Shri Ashok Kumar Jain, Managing Trustee of Bharatiya Jnanpith are continuing their effort in bringing out old classics edited on modern lines. Shri L.C. Jain, Advisor, Bharatiya Jnanpith, deserves all credit for making this publication possible through its various stages of editing and printing.

I pay my homage to Elacharya Munishri Vidyanand Maharaj whose deep interest in this publication has been a source of inspiration to us all.

—*Ka Naa Subramanyam*

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Introductory

I

If one were to ask the literate Tamils, which, among their most ancient works of literature, they like the most, in a great majority of cases, the prompt reply would be Tiruvalluvar's *Tirukkural.*

There are a number of Tamil literary and poetic works that have compelled continuous attention and the admiration of a great number of persons; like Kamban's *Rāmāyaṇam*, Tiruvalluvar's *Tirumandiram*, the Devotional Songs, a vast variety of them by the accepted Masters of Devotion Ilango's *Silappadhikāram*, certain lyrics belonging to the *Puram* and *Aham* sections of the *Sangam* poems; the epic *Jīvaka-cintāmaṇi* of Tiruthakka Thevar which has acquired a reputation as a Marriage Manual, experimenting with a vast variety of metrical patterns making the work of Kamban possible, and so on. Individual favourites there can be many more, the reasons for the favouritism being as many.

But, both in the learned world and in the lay world among the Tamils, the *Kural*, or to give it its full name with a well-earned adjective, 'divine', prosperity-producing, *tiru*, *Tirukkural,* holds an unique position in the Tamils' minds and hearts.

All those poets who succeeded to the Tamil heritage after the time of the *Kural* have confessed their indebtedness to this masterpiece. Sometimes, they have used memorable verses from it, as their own, claiming by such use that the wording of Tiruvalluvar, the poet, is a masterly handling of words, making worldly experience and literary expression meet in no uncertain manner. No one could have done it better. Among those who looked up to literary works for their guidance in life, no book in Tamil has had as much influence and impact as the *Kural* can be said to have. No doubt many might have tried to live

upto its moral grandeur and idealism and many might have failed to live up to its moral grandeur and idealism. But nevertheless, such idealism is not negated by the mere fact of human frailty in not being able to live up to it.

In more recent times when public men and others want talking points, they go, as often as not, to the *Kural*, in the vast stretch of nearly two thousand years of Tamil literature. They quote the *Kural* in and out cf context and often play havoc with the simple common sense of the *Kural*, complicating its essence out of all recognition in the spirit of the learned old commentators, Brahmin or other, Jaina or of other religious persuasion, tending to strain the poet to their own uses, quoting him without full recognition of his simple wisdom, coming between the poet and the reader, and casting a big shadow which obscures even the greatness of the author of the *Kural* at least for a time.

Like all great works of the world, the *Kural* has been parodied as often as possible, during the passage of time. The parodies which might be called *Kirals* are many and some of them have been quite successful. In fact some scholars might be of opinion that some parts of the *Kural* might themselves be parodies of the original author, now passing as the work of the great author attaining a '*Kuralhood*' that is indisputable. We might not have the *kurals* in the form in which the original poet composed them, it has been suggested. Artificial *kurals*, ten in each chapter, look artificial, but a little reflection would show that such artificiality was quite in the larger tradition. Each chapter of ten verses might be said to have one or two or three at the most of 'padded' *kurals*, repeating what has already been said, though not without wholly diluting the effort as a whole. There are arguments suggesting that the whole of the third book of the *Tirukkural*, dealing with Love: hero and heroine coming together in premarital sexual satisfaction, wooing, sulking and the like, might be a later spurious interpolation; but there is nothing that could have prevented a poet of the calibre of Valluvar from trying his hand at obeying the established conventions of love (*aham*) poetry, handed down to him by his ancestors, and creating great poetry as a challenge within the limitations imposed on him by these conventions. And great poetry he has made under these conditions, delight-

ing the hearts of the enjoyers of poetry, traditionally looking for love and the antics of the lovers in his reading.

And there is quite another important section of the *Kural*, the section which deals with the conduct of rulers, and the way they choose ministers, spies, fortify their defences, choose their friends and qualify by education. What has a poet, setting out to prescribe a code of moral conduct for his readers, to do with rulers and ministers and the running of public offices in his times such as were perhaps beyond even his knowledge, much less his control? If we neglect the verses and the whole chapters addressed to a ruler or rulers of his time, we would, first, be doing away with the sparks of learnedness that the poet shows as one well up in the classics of his day in languages other than Tamil, as for instance, Sanskrit. And secondly we would be also doing away with the wholesome and total 'secular' character of the work as a guide to private, as well as public, living. Many of the verses addressed to rulers and the like might be taken as meant for the common public as well, except in matters of technical interest like fortifying defences, etc.; but the greater part of it, on not drinktng alcohol, on not coveting other peoples' wives or goods, or on equanimity, and the like have relevance for the ordinary men and women of the day. Dropping this section of the *Kural* would mean dropping two thirds of the book as we have it.

So that it should be wiser if we refuse to cut off any part of the *Kural* as spurious, unless we can discover sufficient warrant on textual or historical grounds for so cutting off any portion of the text. In any great work, it can be significantly asserted that some parts are better than others. And it is often possible to make excellent selections from a complete work of great excellence and great poetry; we can do it with Shakespeare, we can do it with Homer, we can do it with Dante, we can do it with any great poet we can name from the world tradition. It is among such poets that the author of the *Kural* claims kinship and we can select from his excellent work some three hundred or four hundred verses out of a total of 1330 verses calling them the most effective and memorable of Valluvar's output. This would not question the goodness of his other verses or their respective places in the volume. Such a critical selection has not been possible in the case of the *Kural*, mainly because the Tamil

admirers of the *Kural* have been capable only of adulation and admiration rather than critical approaches. They would quarrel with you for making such a legitimate literary selection, even if they do occasionaly admit that some of the *kurals* are better than the others.

One other factor that has to be taken note of in this connection is the most obvious fact that the author of the *Tirukkural* was undoubtedly a practising, or perhaps a born Jaina of his day.

The Jainas have been unpopular with the Tamils for no reasons except that the devotional poets by tradition have considered to have made mince meat of them in historical times though the legends about the killing off of Jainas might be only legendary, inserted into history to please a few devotees of other religions. From one section of the tradition itself in Tamil, the *Kural* has been considered indubitably a Jaina work. Most later Jaina works accepted the *Kural* as a Jaina work; it is obvious also that the Jaina works were more indebted to the *Kural* and often used phrases and terms from it in great number, though non-Jaina works quoting the *Kural* admiringly are not wanting either.

But the commentators who took it upon themselves to interpret the *kurals* for the Tamils coming nearly eight or ten centuries after Tiruvalluvar took it upon themselves to interpret whatever he said in his verses sometimes in Brahminical or Vaiṣṇavite or Śaivite or other fashion. Continuing the line set by medieval commentators, even Christian commentators on the *Kural*, like G.U. Pope took it upon themselves to claim the *Kural* as, more or less, a Christian text.

And sufficient is not known with certainty about the life, times and creed of the author of the *Kural* to refute these arguments and establish everything with impeccable certainty. From a reading of the text, and from the large importance given to non-violence as a creed for living, it might be argued that Tiruvalluvar was a Jaina in his creed.

But before arraying the evidence available, both from the text of the *Kural* and from such external evidence as well as circumstantial that might be available for thinking of the author of the *Kural* Tiruvalluvar as a Jaina, it will be good and necessary to look at the text without a religious context for the

present and to find out what the author poet was attempting to achieve in his own unique and singular way.

II

The *Kural* is not a voluminous work.

It consists of 1330 two-line stanzas, the first line a long one consisting of a fixed number of syllables and the second line, somewhat shorter, of again a fixed number of syllables. It is not what is meant by the English couplet. It has beginning rhymes and not end rhymes.

The work takes its name from the name of the metrical form used by the poet, the *Kural venba*. The *Kural venba* is a shorter form of the *venba* which has usually a four line stanza.

There are other names by which the *Kural* is known to the Tamils equally depending, if not on the stanza form, on the content and the attempt to be comprehensive and total.

It is known as the *Muppaal*, dealing with the three sections out of four life purposes for which human beings strive. *Dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa* are the four if we accept that division of the efforts of human life. *Muppaal* deals with the first three *puruṣārthas* of human endeavour, the *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*, and neglects to deal with the *mokṣa* part of human endeavour.

The question arises as to whether Valluvar, the poet, was a heretic in regard to *mokṣa*, salvation, as far as we understand it as part of human endeavour of purpose by Hindu or Jaina or other standards. Valluvar was certainly not a heretic, his verses abound with references to *mokṣa* as an end of life, a purpose worth cultivating. Even in dealing with material things, the poet connects them with salvation, in strictly moral terms, as for instance when he says, "When you make wealth by worthy means, you enjoy both the present life because of wealth accumulated, but are in sight of the joys of the other life, in virtue of your having made the wealth by just means."

It will be interesting to speculate about why, or how, Valluvar came to neglect the fourth purpose of life, confining himself to the pursuit of moral grandeur (*dharma*), material wealth (*artha*) and enjoyment of the pleasures of life (*kāma*). This enquiry had better wait till a later stage when we can claim

to be more acquainted with the purposes and tenets of the *Tirukkural*. The attempt of the poet seems to have been to compress his expression as tight as he can, trying to generate an aura of proverbial wisdom in his statements.

Now, proverbs come into being as folk wisdom, accumulating over ages and getting compressed into the most serviceable and commonly known words. What age and folk wisdom attempted to do, the author of the *Kural* aspired to combine in himself. The proverbial form into which the author of the *Kural* cast his aphorism are evident in many couplets, or *kurals*, as for instance, when he says, "Control your tongue; if you don't, you will be dragged along into undefinable difficulties." or when he says of Love, "Strange fire that burns when far off and cools when near." or when he observes, "It is ignorance you buy, when you buy and drink alcoholic liquor."

With perhaps proverbial exaggeratedness, he sometimes avers that truth is the greatest of virtues, that good friends are the greatest wealth, that learning is good but wisdom better, that humility or modest speech or not succumbing to cant or not seeking the pleasures of thought of women—each in its context assumes exaggerated importance, but fits totally into a scheme for a grand purposeful and wholly moral life.

And we have experience of proverbs being expanded into meanings that the proverbs were never meant to convey. As when we say, "Too many cooks spoil the broth" and add, that indeed they do. As when we say, "honesty is the best policy" because you need not be forced to invent things when questioned. "Ask me no questions and I shall tell you no fibs" is another instance which can be so expanded.

In a like manner, the *Kural* of Tiruvalluvar in individual instances can be made to mean many things to many men. This has given rise to astute commentators, agog to use the support of the author poet in their contentions and specious commentaries which are too far-fetched and too much out of place in a somewhat moralistically simplistic age and clime. In later ages sophistication about morality has been on the increase and the latest commentator of the *Kural* can add considerably to the conception of morality which the author might have had. It is a hard task to get over these commentators and their work for some of their work is genuinely worth while and learned, even

if they do come between the poet and his reader; but a few do "pervert" the meanings of the poet consciously. The reading of other than Jaina concepts into the system of morality proposed by the author of the *Kural* is historically generally mischievous, for it is quite obvious that he was writing from a Jaina point of view of lay morals with just the emphasis on asceticism, the control of the senses necessary and the attending to the duties of the households etc. etc. that fits into the Jaina theme particularly while all of them will have to be forced into Procrustean beds to suit other tenets, or systems, of morality or beliefs.

The *Tirukkural* consists of 1330 couplets or more accurately *kurals*, divided into 133 chapters of ten verses each; each chapter having a title of its own as the text stands today.

It will be difficult to say whether the titles of the chapters are those given originally by the poet; even whether the order in which we read the *Kural* today is the order in which the poet composed it, or even wanted us to read it.

We have it on the authority of scholars, meticulously inclined like Vaiyapuri Pillai, that the ordering of the *kurals* and chapters are subject to variation in different medieval commentators and that perhaps the ordering of the chapters is the same as that the poet did. Much less so might be the chapter headings, though most commentators take a delight in pointing out that such a chapter follows such a chapter or such a thing by a certain kind of logical system of thought.

Ten verses to each chapter, again, looks an artificial division which might however have been considered proper in the times of Valluvar. But the argument for thinking of interpolations in such chapters might be supported by what might be called padding which we can detect, as often as not. Some verses repeat things which have already been said, effectively or are said more effectively later on, as in the chapter 'On Rain' which comes early in the book, or on 'Not Coveting Another's Wealth'. Such interpolations, if they exist, cannot be proved conclusively at this age and time. We have to accept the whole as the work of the poet, granting that even a great poet like Homer might nod sometimes.

It is quite conceivable that other poets, not as great perhaps as Valluvar, tried their hand at creating new *kurals* that would pass muster and interpolate them in the text; given the age and

the poets, it is not inconceivable. But whatever the merits, or demerits, of these interpolations, whatever their poetic qualities or lack of them, they did not vitiate the framework of the whole, and did not affect it, except in some small parts. Such has been the indisputable genius of the author, Valluvar. A few of the interpolators might also have been great poets in their own right but innovators or creators in the sense in which Valluvar was both an innovator and creator.

But enough of these speculations which can lead us nowhere, except to say that, if there are interpolations that confuse the issue whether the author was a Jaina or not, it is reasonable that such doubts arise. But on the whole in spite of the interpolations and the like, the general trend seems to be the establishment of a moral system such as obtained among the Jaina laymen of those days with its hierarchies of ascetics and householders, the first attending to the spiritual wealth of the community and the second attending to the material prosperity of the community.

The first four chapters of the *Kural* are a sort of preliminary and deal with 'Praise of God', 'Praise of Rain', 'Praise of Renouncers' and 'Praise of Righteousness'. These four chapters are equated by Jaina scholars of modern times with the three Jaina invocations, with an additional 'Rain' somewhere in the middle, which, however, does not seem to fit in. But the other three on God equated as *Arhats* and of Renouncers of the world, the ascetics, who sustain the Jaina world both materially and morally, might go far to argue the Jainahood of the author without any controversy. The present ordering of chapters might be a later alteration of the text when it no longer suited the scholars to think of the author of the *Kural* as a Jaina. We can only speculate on it, and cannot say for certain.

Chapters 5 to 38 (both inclusive) deal with day to day life of the private citizen, taking note of his family life, his wife and children, and his capacity to govern his desires and deal with Fate. This, the book one, of the *Kural* is known as *Arathuppāl* dealing with *dharma* or the law of the moral righteousness in general. It consists of 34 chapters comprising 340 *kurals* or two-line verses.

The second book of the *Kural* is usually entitled *Porutpāl*—the book of Material Things. It consists of seventy chapters

consisting of 700 *kurals* covering the various aspects of 'Rulers' and of 'Knowledge', of 'Using That Knowledge', on 'Friendship', on 'Being Great of Speech', on 'Enemies Within', on 'Base Men'. This second book consists of chapter 39 to chapter 108, both inclusive. This can be roughly taken as dealing with public life, its laws of righteousness, morality etc.

The third book which is entitled *Kamathuppāl* or the book of Love consists of chapters 109 to 133, making up 250 verses of two lines each, dealing with Love. The love is premarital, leading to marriage, and it follows the conventions laid down by the *Saṅgam* poets, if *Tirukkural* is allowed to be a later work than the *Saṅgam* poems. It might be considered as setting the tone for the *Saṅgam* poems if it were accepted as a previous in time. The date of the *Kural* is by no means certain, though a scholarly consensus obtains, dating it back to the first century A.D., if not a few decades before Christ.

I shall speak at a later stage of the whole of the third book of the *Kural* which might be considered either as the height of imaginative poetry as conceived by a great poet, or as a wholesale interpolation, just glorifying the *aham* conventions of the bulk of early Tamil poetry. Each view of it might be considered valid.

Textual, interpretative and religious problems apart, the *Kural* is a much loved book of the Tamils for reasons that might be set out somewhat sketchily in the next section.

III

The *Kural*, in the Tamil language, is memorable, in many of its formulations of practicable morality. It might lack a metaphysical grandeur such as Hindu religious and philosophical speculations of that period and Buddhist or even Jaina religious writings had. It subscribed to a moral grandeur and made that grandeur not merely recognisably idealistic and humanistic, but wholly practical and realistic as well. This might be said to have been possible for the poet, if not mainly because he was practising Jaina, but because he was familiar with the whole moral religious structure of *dharma* or morality as it stood in his time. The proverbial form of the two-line *venba* came all the easier to him perhaps, because he was a practising Jaina who had only

to clothe his moralistic views into proper, and fitting, expression. Not all the practising Jainas could have been poets, but it is certain that Valluvar was and continues to be a great poet, in a tradition which does not lack great poets and in spite of the intensifying variations of poetic activity in more modern periods.

Not only from observetion and personal experience and practised virtues was he trying to make poetry, but it is evident that the poet Valluvar was quite well read in the texts available to him, both in Tamil and in other languages, notably Sanskrit. The late Vaiyapuri Pillai who was generally careful and meticulous about these things traces some of the Sanskrit sources of some of the verses in the *Kural* though his dating of *Kural* is not generally accepted by Tamil scholars.

But whatever that might be, it is obvious that the poet was distilling from both his vast experience and his vast reading of the codes of conduct for those who cared to read him and (much larger in number at that time) for those who cared to listen to him.

Even a superficial reading of the *Kural*, makes us understand that the poet accepts man as the centre of the world, thus subscribing to a position that is definitely at the centre of humanistic propositions of all kinds, subsequent as well as prior to him. Confucius, the other humanist, asked, "What shall truth be worth, unless it be of profit to men?" Tiruvalluvar defined "Truth as that which harms no living being", deriving truth itself from the ultimate Jaina virtue of *ahiṁsā*, non-violence, which according to Jaina morality is the basis of all action, any action The poet attempts various other definitions of truth as of other ultimate things, but always insists that truth and other things whatever should not do harm to other living beings as well humans.

It is this indefatigable humanism that makes of the *Kural* a significant document in the midst of negation of life, and human life in particular, current in many of the socalled scriptures of India, especially of Hinduism. Buddhism, as well as Jainism, defined God and the authority of the Vedas, it is true—the Buddhists because of their metaphysical speculations and in reaction to rituals and rigidities of caste and Jainism because it was in concept and practice older than the Vedas in India,

having been present at the time of the speculations of the Vedic poets and hymn makers. The Jainas found themselves out of the fold of Hinduism, partly because among other things, a large non-acceptance of Vedic practices and rituals and also because of emerging caste patterns which were part of the Vedic syndrome and also partly because the large yea-saying aspect of Jainism to life was absent in Hinduism. Reverence for life, for all life, was one of the cornerstones of Jainism; Buddhism, while acknowledging a somewhat similar reverence for all life, did not protest over much about the killing of animals for food —one should not kill, according to Buddhism, but one can buy one's meat. In one *kural*, the poet Valluvar refutes this idea, saying that "So long as there are buyers of meat there will also be killers of animals. So do not buy meat." (X 7.6)

One remembers the quip of Vinayak Damodar Satvalekar in the context of the subsequent disappearance of Buddhism from India. He said that "it was because the Buddhists were unkind to men in the name of kindness to animals that Buddhism disappeared from India." A facetious assertion perhaps, but perhaps true to a greater extent than is normally realised.

The yea-saying quality to be found in the *Kural* pleased a person of modern times who was most difficult to please, Dr. Albert Schweitzer. His reading in the scriptures of India might not be extensive or exhaustive, but the *Tirukkural* came in for praise. He is on record as an admirer of the *Kural* for its positive humanistic qualities.

It is this same humanistic quality in the *Kural* that led Christian missionaries and others, when they came into contact with the *Kural*, esteem it as a priceless document. A person of great Tamil learning, like Rev. Dr. G.U. Pope, singled out certain passages in the *Kural* and pointed out that in these verses the great poet was certainly a Christian. He later speculated on whether Valluvar might not have had a glimpse into Christianity, or had even become a Christian convert, due to the proselytysing activities of Saint Thomas, legendarily believed to have been in Mylapore in the third quarter of the first century after Christ. Indian legend too places the activities of Valluvar round about that area and in that age, sometime in the first century A.D. One can only speculate about it, but it is quite probable that Saint Thomas was actively preaching Jesus Christ's perso-

nality and message in the Mylapore area, during the second half the first century A.D. and the two Saints, Saint Thomas and Saint Tiruvalluvar, met and listened to each other. More than a Hindu, the chances are that a Jaina moralist might have felt attracted towards some of the doctrines preached in the new faith. It does not vitiate the position one can take about Valluvar having been a practising Jaina householder or just out of the old fold of Hinduism—his name itself indicates that he was an outcaste and an untouchable, Valluvars being among the group we call *Harijans* now, and might have even found Christian doctrines attractive. He might have used some of the phrases and words he had heard from Saint Thomas in his verses. That is not improbable at all, even if only highly speculative. That a person of high moral calibre like Valluvar might have resisted conversion unlike the fishermen and other not so learned men among whom Saint Thomas was preaching, could also be easily understood. Valluvar, as well as the world, has been the richer for Christianity – it cannot be denied; even if it cannot be altogether proved that Valluvar had anything to do with Christianity. The ideas were in the air, and any one was free to use the ideas that came his way. Tiruvalluvar made great use of ideas that came his way. Tiruvalluvar made great use of ideas that are inherited from the moral parts of Hinduism, Budhhism, as well as other religions of his day, but the greater part of his familiarity was with Jainism—the division of men into ascetics and householders, the importance of the tillers of the soil, and merchant caste being the sustainers of material life and prosperity, and also Jaina ideas along with the form that *ahiṁsā* or non-violence to human and all living beings was the moral essence of the reverence for life and that the best way of living now was "making wealth by all fair means", entertaining worthy guests, and living a peaceable full life with offsprings one could be proud of and with a wife who respected her husband and lived within her means, happy in this life, and fit for heaven, if the heavens were there after death.

IV

Reading a work like the *Kural* in modern times, one feels, and cannot help but feel, that the work has a very modern out-

look, especially on problems that affect material good living. We have a feeling that, earlier, life in India was mostly spiritual and religious and that material things did not matter at all to our ancestors. But a reading of the *Kural* allows us to question this basic assumption as untrue, at least in great parts.

In Chapter 25 on the theme of 'Compassion', the poet Valluvar in the seventh verse makes a point that "He who has no compassion will not inherit heaven as he who has not wealth cannot inherit this earth." (X 6.7). A truly materialistic statement, uplifting the economic view of things in contrast to our general view about Indian life. While this worldly view suits us in the modern age when only two verses later the poet says, "He who gives without compassion in his heart is like the ignorant fellow who seeks truth." (X 6.9). It is startlingly inadequate both, as modernity and as humanism Evidently the author means that those ignorant of books and learning. should they be denied Truth? Should not the more ignorant ones seek truth the more assiduously? The poor seek wealth and the ignorant, it is natural, seek Truth in their own way and sometimes they may even find it, all credit to them! It is a case of 'Modern' inadequacy in the *Kural*.

But such lapses are few and far between, and the author of the *Kural* does not make many false statements even by modern reader's standards in his book. We can ignore them as interpolations of later times to make up numbers or out of vanity, but the general run of the work is totally humanistic, modern, secular, and most tolerant. The beliefs of Valluvar were beliefs in the faith of his time—in God, in Gods, in Fate, in reaping the fruits of one's acts, on *karman* and the like.

But what has Valluvar to do with God if he were a practising Jaina? His first chapter is entitled today, 'In Praise of God', but he defines God in terms that tally with the Jaina ideas of Tīrthaṅkaras though he begins with "The alphabet *A* begins all letters; likewise the world begins with *Ādi Bhugavān*." (X 3.1). Certainly a Jaina term this *Ādi Bhagavān* is. The attempt of the poet was perhaps to define the first known world order as made by *Ādi Bhagavān* as the world of literature is made by the alphabets beginning with *A*. I shall have more to say on this as well as the ten verses 'In Praise of God' placed as the first chapter of the text of the *Kural* as we have it today, in a subsequent chapter.

Valluvar does not, it is evident, steer clear of other religious ideas or moral principles attributed to or gained from other-religions. Though demonstrably a Jaina, he was tolerant of other ideas and other practitioners of other practised religions and was wholly without bias in dealing with human beings as human beings.

And perhaps, I should add a personal note, saying that I can claim to be as secular as the author of the *Tirukkural* himself. I am not particularly a scholar in Jainism, or any of the other 'isms' of the times of Valluvar or of the present times. And I am not a practising Hindu in the sense that I follow ritual practices, or temple observances strictly. Yet reading the *Tirukkural*, without the aid of commentators, trying to interpret the verses to myself as best as I might, I find myself convinced that if Valluvar was not a Jaina by conviction, or practice, he had no recognisable religion at all. His insistence on non-violence and the moral life in consistence with the tenets of Jainism are clues obvious enough.

And I might add that the late Vaiyapuri Pillai categorically states that the author of the *Kural* like Tolkappiyar before him, the author of the old grammer in the language, was a Jaina. He adduces adequate proofs, trying to clinch the argument with his references to Godhead, in the first chapter and other material from the text.

But the most consistent of the efforts made so far to prove the Jainahood of the author of the *Kural* were made by the late Prof. A. Chakravarti, himself a philosopher, academically trained in the western systems of philosophy and familiar with the Indian systems of thought, and himself a practising Jaina. Born a Tamil, his interest was necessarily roused by the neglect of Jaina literature among the Tamils, and he edited various Jaina texts, both from Tamil and Prakrit and has written a series of essays in English on the Jaina contribution to Tamil literature.

On the basis of his extensive studies of the early Jaina *ācārya* from the South, Śrī Kundakunda Ācārya who lived round about the first century A.D. and who is identified as the Elācārya of Tamil legend, and from various other sources, he identifies the author of the *Tirukkural* text as the same Kundakunda Ācārya and identifies places in the South with him and in his researches he has been assisted by his own editions

of the Ācarya's Jaina works and makes him offer the opinion that the *Kural* was of his authorship, the only one he wrote in the local language of the Tamils among whom he lived and which he sent through a friend, or disciple of his, to Madurai to get approval from the *Saṅgam* of Tamil academics and the academics were against the text because the text was Jaina, but it took a miracle to establish the Tamil text on the Tamil throne etc. etc.

Much might be said in support of the theory that Kundakunda Ācārya was the author of the *Kural.* For one thing, the author of the *Kural* was a learned man, familiar with the extensive moral spiritual and literary material available to him in his age. Secondly, the Tamil tradition and legends which are varied and incredible and mostly apocryphal stories about him have nothing authentic by way of biograhical details about the author. And thirdly, the Tamil tradition identifies an Eladhi Nayanar in somewhat close proximity to Valluvar, but says nothing further. Under these somewhat negative proofs, it can be more than acceptable as proved by circumstantial evidence that Śrī Kundakunda Ācārya might have fathered the work and might have underscored the relationship of Eladhi Nayanar with the Valluvar of the *Kural* for among his own many names Elācārya is given as one.

The author of the *Kural* is named as Tiruvalluvar Nayanar perhaps because of the early recognition of the author as being a member of the Jaina community.

The internal weight of the textual evidence seems to point out that the author of the *Kural* could not have been anything but a practising Jaina, well versed in Jaina moral science and *dharma*, interested in making the Jaina doctorines of morality available to the laymen who belonged to the body of Jaina practitioners but who may not have been generally aware of the finer points of Jaina moral theory. The attempt to prepare a *vade-mecum*, as it were, a handbook for daily guidance of life, was a laudable aim and Valluvar did succeed more than most, in preparing a Conduct of Life for those inclined to listen to him. without rousing controversies, or schisms or heresies.

In this attempt, if we take it that Tiruvalluvar belonged to the first century A. D., it can be pointed out that he was living in a society that was wholly Jaina. Hindu Vedic influences might

not have seeped down into Tamilnadu completely but they were not wholly absent either. Jainism and Buddhism were religious waves and there is the likelihood of there having been in the air a preaching Christianity, if we accept the legend of Saint Thomas at its face value. Other religions and practises now lost to view might have also obtained. From a history of the Tamils, it is obvious that the Pallavas, Colas and Pāṇḍyas and various other regional chieftains were of Jaina persuasion before they were converted to the Śaiva, or Vaiṣṇava, persuasion which seems to have happened by the sixth or seventh century A.D. So the palmier days of Jainism in Tamilnadu were perhaps after Tiruvalluvar, and were yet to come; perhaps among others, *Tirukkural* made it possible for Jaina ideas to rule over the minds of men, especially rulers in that age. There is no means of asserting it either way. But Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava devotional leaders do talk sometimes in zealous, if somewhat exaggerated, terms, even barbarously claiming to have killed off quite a number of inoppressive Jainas, after defeating them in dialogues. The *Tiruvilayadar-purāṇam* speaks of the gross injustice done to the Jainas, just because they were disproved, thus perhaps bringing to an end the large humanism of Jaina origins reigning among the Tamils for a few centuries at least.

Prof. A. Chakravarti speaks of a small ruler of Pallava origin whose name is but indistinctly known to history, he is by no means famous as his descendants were to be, to whom Śrī Kundakunda Ācārya was, or might have been, tutor. If it really were so, it might explain the fact that quite a number of chapters in the *Kural*, some of them of great effectiveness, are addressed to this ruler. Otherwise both advice and verses would have to be considered just theoretic, academic and even futile.

The problem of chronology is important as is the problem of identification of the author essential, though at the state of present knowledge, nothing more than some speculation might be at all possible. This is so, not only about the problem of the author of the *Kural* and his times, as of many other equally important problems connected with Tamil literature. Even the Jaina contributions for various reasons, in the beginnings, of Tamil literature are somewhat neglected in our studies and just as often belittled. In the first ten centuries, there is reason to believe that the Jaina influence was the largest and the most continuous; not

only in the *Saṅgam* poetry (*Saṅgam* itself is a word of Jaina origin in Tamil, though the stories about the *Saṅgam* and its activities have been more or less discredited by modern scholarship.) Jaina impact and contribution may not be wholly extractable from the *Saṅgam* poems, but the mere fact that it is different in content and approach from other Hindu writings of that period and that the major part of it is available only in well thought-out anthologies, might be a proof of Jaina contributions to the beginnings of Tamil, lifting a local spoken dialect to the status of a full fledged literary language, in concerted conscious effort, through three or four centuries. The *Kural* might have come after, or just before the *Saṅgam* poems. The eighteen minor 'moral' texts, two of them major, if we set aside strict chronology and include the *Kural* and *Naliadiyār* works as in the eighteen texts as is usually done, are the work of Jainas. This age was followed by the age of the five major epics and the five minor epics, the majority of them of Jaina inspiration if not completely devoted to Jaina activities. The heroes of these epics are, in the main, Vaiśyas, the merchants of the age, who were inclined to Jainism and were the backbone of the communities and their economies. It was only by the tenth century or thereabouts, that the Jaina impact wore off, replacing the highly moral age and by the predilections of the ecstatic devotionalism of the Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite saints working towards an acceptance of the norms and mores of the majority of academic literature produced in Sanskrit and other Sanskrit-inspired languages in India, bearing witness to a linguistic imperialism against which there had been continuous protest a little different in quality from the Jaina moral protest. There is scope for rewriting the history of Tamil literature of the first ten centuries of the Christian era delineating it as a protest of great effectiveness in the context of Indian literature and as being largely inspired by the Jainas.

But that is not the scope of the present monograph which sets out to attempt to explore the Jaina nature of the *Kural* as a work of day to day morals, outlining a code of conduct for the Jaina lay householders caught in the material world of making money by right means and helping the ascetics and the ascetic orders to survive in a not too hostile world.

One would wish that one had more information about the times in which the author of the *Kural* lived; the influences that

formed his mind, the experiences that gave him his razor sharp expression at an early stage in the evolution of Tamil literature, his reading and the circumstances of his life, in broad outline even if not in great detail. Instead of certain information, we have quite a number of apocryphal legends and stories, exaggerated attitudes about how the Madurai *Saṅgam* tried to reject him and his work, and his birth, marriage, wife and other things.

It is vain, however, to sigh after such detail because, at this stage, and after such a length of time, we are not likely to get any more information on the life, circumstances, reading etc. of the poet. Even about a late comer like Subramania Bharati (1882-1921), we do not have much relevant information, not as much as we would desire. But we can, to a certain extent, speculate about the making of the *Kural* and something of this kind has been done with some probability by a scholar like Prof. A. Chakravarti, which I quote in my next section in this introductory chapter. I take the passage from Prof. Chakravarti's treatise *Jaina Literature in Tamil*, a fairly comprehensive account, though with characteristic modesty, the Jaina scholar has included only certain things which were of common knowledge, avoiding speculating more than was necessary in such cases.

V

An extract with reference to the *Kural* from Prof. A. Chakravarti's *Jaina Literature in Tamil*, first published in 1941 and reprinted by the Bharatiya Jnanpith, in 1974.

The ethical work called *Kural* is a most important work in Tamil literature, judged by its popularity among the Tamil speaking people. It is composed in the form of couplets known as *kural venba*, a metre peculiar to Tamil literature. The term *kural* means short as opposed to the other type of *venba* which is also a metre peculiar to Tamil literature. The book derives its name from the metre employed in its composition. It is a work based on the doctrine of *ahiṁsā*; and throughout you have the praising of this *ahiṁsā-dharma* and the criticism of views opposed to this. The work is considered as important by the Tamils, that they use various names to designate the great

work, such as *Uttara Veda*, Tamil *Veda*, Divine Scripture, the Great Truth, Nondenominational *Veda* etc. The work is claimed by almost all the religious sects of Tamil land. The Śaivite claims that it was composed by a Śaivite author. The Vaiṣṇavites claim it as their own. The Reverend Pope who translated this work into English even suggests that it is the work of an author influenced by Christianity. The fact that the different communities are vying with one another in their claims to the authoriship of the great work is itself an indication of its great eminence and importance. In the midst of all such various claims, we have the Jaina who maintains that it is the work of a great Jaina *ācārya*. Jaina tradition associates this great ethical work with Elācāryar, which is the other name for Śrī Kundakunda Ācārya. The pariod of Śrī Kundakunda Ācārya is covered by the latter half of the first century B.C. and the former half of the first century A.D. We have referred earlier in this work to Śrī Kundakunda Ācārya as the chief of the Draviḍa *Saṅgha* at Pāṭaliputra.

We are not merely to depend on this tradition of the Jainas to base our conclusions about the Jaina origins of the *Kural*.

We have sufficient internal evidence as well as circumstantial evidence to substantiate our view. To any unbiassed student who critically examines the contents of this work, it would be quite clear that it is replete with the *ahiṁsā* doctrine, and therefore if must be a product of Jaina imagination. Unbiassed Tamil scholars have expressed similar opinions as to the authorship of this work. But the majority of the Tamil scholars amog the non-Jainas are not willing to accept such a verdict, based upon scientific investigation. This opposition is mainly traceable to religious feeling. About the time of Hindu revival (about the 7th century A.D.) the clash between the Jaina religion and the *Vedic* sacrificial religion of the Hindu reformers must have been so tremendous that echoes of it are felt even now. In this conflict the Jaina teachers were worsted evidently by the Hindu revivalists who had the support of the newly converted Pāṇḍyan king on their side. As a result of this it is said that several Jaina teachers were put to death by impaling them. How much of this is history and how much of this is the creation of fertile imagination fed by religious animosity, we are not able to assess clearly. But even to this day, we have this story of the impaling

of the Jainas painted on the walls of the Madurai temple, and annual festivals are conducted celebrating the defeat and destruction of religious rivals. This would give us an insight into the attitude of the Tamil scholars towards the early Jainas. It is no secret, therefore, that they generally resent the very suggestion that this great ethical work must have been written by a Jaina scholar.

According to one tradition the author of this work is said to be one Tiruvalluvar about whom nothing is known except what is concocted by the imagination of a modern writer who is responsible for the fictitious story relating to Tiruvalluvar. That he is born of a *cāṇḍāla* woman, that he was a brother and contemporary of almost all great Tamil writers, are some of the absurd instances mentioned in the life of Tiruvalluvar. To mention it, is enough to discredit it. But the more enthusiastic among modern Tamil scholars and modern Tamils have elevated him into a Godhead and built temples in his name and conducted annual festivals analogous with the festivals associated with other Hindu deities. The author is claimed to be one of the Hindu deities and the work is considered to be a revelation by such a deity. From such quarters one cannot expect application of historical criticism ordinarily. So much so whenever any hypothesis is suggested as a result of critical examination of the contents, it is rejected with a vehemence characteristic of uninstructed religious zeal. Many so called critics who have written something or other about this great work have been careful to maintain that intellectual attitude which Samual Johnson had when he had to report the proceedings of the House of Commons. He was particular to see that the Whigs had not the better of it. When such is the general mentality of the Tamil students and when the real spirit of research adopting the scientific and historical method is still in its infancy, it is no wonder that we have nothing worth the name of Tamil literature. Hence we are handicapped in our own attempt in presenting anything like a historical account of Jaina literature.

Turning from this digression to an examination of the work, we have to mention certain salient facts contained in the book itself. The book contains three great topics *Aram, Porul, Inbam* i.e. *dharma, artha* and *kāma*. These three topics are interpreted and expounded as to be in thorough conformity with the basic

doctrine of *ahiṁsā*. Hence it need not be emphasised that the terms here slightly differ from what they imply in the ordinary Hindu religious work. Later Hindu religious systems, inasmuch as they are resting on the Vedic sacrificial ritualism, cannot completely throw overboard the practice of animal sacrifice enjoined in the Vedas. The term *dharma* could mean therefore to them only the *Varṇ-āśrama-dharma* based upon Vedic sacrifice. Only three Indian systems were opposed to this doctrine of Vedic sacrifice; Jaina *darśana*, Sāṅkhya *darśana* and Bauddha *darśana*. Representatives of these three *darśanas* were present in the prerevivalist period. In the very beginning of the work, in the chapter on *dharma*, the author gives this as his own view that "it is far better, and more virtuous, to abstain from killing and eating any animal than to perform one thousand sacrifices." This one single verse is enough to point out that the author would not have acquiesced in any from of such sacrificial ritualism. The verse is nothing more than a paraphrase as the Sanskrit words *ahiṁsā paramo dharmaḥ*. I was surprised to see this same verse quoted by a Śaitive scholar in Tamil to prove that the author of the *Kural* had as his religion Vedic sacrificial ritualism.

In the same section devoted to vegetarian food the author distinctly condemns the Bauddha principle of purchasing meat from the butcher. Buddhists who after lip service to *ahiṁsā* doctrine console themselves by saying that they are not to kill with their own hands, but may purchase meat from the slaughter house. The author of the *Kural* in unmistakable terms points out that the butcher's trade thrives only because of the demand for meat. The butcher's interest is merely to make money and he adopts a particular trade determined by the principle of supply and demand. Therefore the responsibility of killing the animals for food is mainly on your head and not on the butcher's, says the poet of the *Kural*. When there is such an open condemnation of animal sacrifice which is sanctioned by Vedic ritualism and the Buddhistic practice of eating meat by a convenient interpretation of the *ahiṁsā* doctrine, it is clear, by a process of elimination, that the only religion that conforms to the principles enunciated in the book is the religion of *ahiṁsā* upheld by the Jainas. It is maintained by a wellknown Tamil scholar, living, that the work is a faithful translation of the

Dharma-śāstra of Bodhāyana. Though very many Sanskrit words are found in this work and though from among the traditional doctrines some are treated therein, still it would not be accurate to maintian that it is merely an echo of what appeared in the Sanskrit literature, because many of these doctrines are reinterpreted in the light of the *ahiṁsā* doctrine. It is enough to mention only two points. This Bodhāyana *Dharma-śāstra*, since it is based on the traditional *varṇ-āśrama,* keeps to the traditional four castes and their duties. According to this conception of *dharma*, cultivation of land is left to the last class of Śūdras, and would be certainly *infra dig* for the upper classes to have anything to do with agriculture. The author of the *Tirukkural* on the other hand, probably because he is of the *Vellala* or the agriculture class of the land, places agriculture first among the professions. For he says that "Living *par excellence* is living by tilling the land and every other mode of life is parasitical and next to that of the tiller of the soil " It is too much to swallow that such a doctrine is borrowed from the Sanskrit *dharma-śāstras.* Another interesting fact mentioned by the *dharma-śāstras* is the mode of entertaining guests by householders. Such an entertainment is always associated with the killing of a fat calf; the chapter on guests in the Bhodhāyana *dharma-śāstra* gives a list of animals that ought to be killed for the purpose of entertaining guests. This is a necessary part of *dharma* and that violation of it will entail curse from the guests is the firm belief of those who accept Vedic ritualism as religion. A cursory glance at the corresponding chapter about guests, Chapter 9 in the *Kural* will convince any reader that the *dharma* here means quite a different thing from what it means in the *dharma-śāstras* of the Hindus. Hence we have to reject this suggestion that the work represents merely a translation of the *dharma-śāstras* for the benefit of the Tamil-reading public

Turning to circumstantial evidence, we have to note the following facts. The Jaina commentator of the Tamil work, called *Nila-keśi*, freely quotes from this *Kural*; and whenever he quotes, he introduces the quotation with the words "As is mentioned in our scripture." From this it is clear that the commentator considered this work as an important Jaina scripture in Tamil. Secondly the same implication is found in a non-Jaina

Tamil work, called *Prabodha-candrodaya*. This Tamil work is evidently modelled after the Sanskrit drama *Prabodha-candrodaya*. This Tamil work is in *viruttam* metre, each stanza consisting of four lines. It is also in the form of a drama where the representatives of the various religions are introduced on the stage. Each one is introduced while reciting a characteristic verse containing the essence of the religion. When the Jaina *sannyāsin* appears on the stage, he is made to recite that particular verse from the *Kural* which praises the *ahiṁsā* doctrine that not killing a single life for the purpose of eating is far better than performing a 1000 *yajñas*. It will not be far wrong to suggest that in the eyes of this dramatist, the *Kural* was characteristically a Jaina work. Otherwise he would not have put this verse in the mouth of the *nirgrantha-vādin*. This much is enough. We may end this discussion by saying that this work is composed for the purpose of inculcating the principle of *ahiṁsā* in all its multifarious aspects probably by a great Jaina scholar of eminence about the first century of the Christian era.

VI

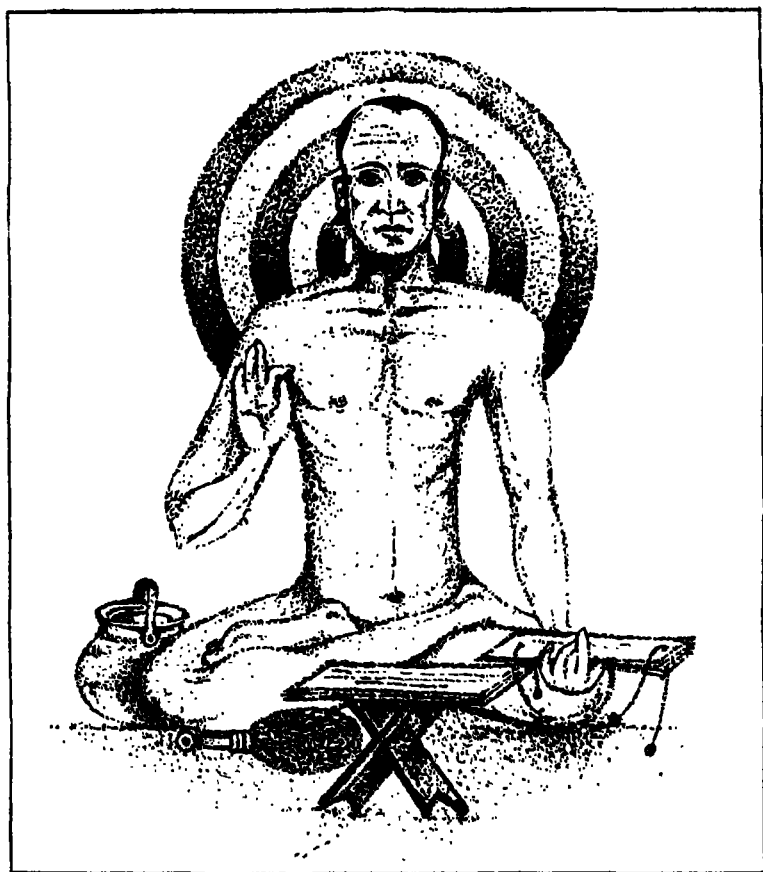
The late Prof. A. Chakravarti has adduced two internal witnesses to his contention and two circumstantial facts that confirm his contention that the *Kural* is indubitably a work by a Jaina scholar.

I am sure that more such evidence could be found. I can suggest tentatively that because the *Kural* was recognised as a first rate Jaina work, it was quoted more by Jaina poets than by other practitioners of poetry in Tamil since it was composed till the final disappearance of Jaina doctrines and influence in Tamil if it can be said to have disappeared even now.

But the text of the *Kural* itself offers the greatest and largest number of points that can be observed about its being a Jaina text, however you might consider it.

In the following pages, understanding only a little of Jaina principles and doctrines, I shall offer proofs of what I think are the internal evidences of Jainism in the text. In some cases I have tried to substantiate Tiruvalluvar's enunciations with a few quotations from Jaina texts.

My own interest in the controversy will be a continued

recognition of 'protest' in literature as a valid point of greatness. I tend to view the rise and origin of Tamil literature itself as a 'protest' of valid effectiveness against the orthodox literary practices of the day, as shown by imperialist Sanskrit by and large and orthodox Hindu sentiments. Both *Sangam* poetry and later the ethical texts of the Tamils, like the *Kural, Nāladiyār* and the Tamil epics in their entirety, were born of the spirit of 'protest', the Tamils being the people who kept up the spirit of 'protest', although it was bound to fail in the long run, for a greater length of time than is visible in any other literary effort in the world. This 'protest' poetry is refreshing in all its emanations and can inform present literary activity for good. *Kural* is not merely a moral text, but a moral text that was different in tone and temper from ethical enunciations of the time and age to which Valluvar belonged. The Tamils tried to stand out against him, but finding it impossible, tried to absorb him into the larger tradition of other ideals to which they had to succumb in course of time. The greatest of the poets of the Tamil tradition, at least one of the greatest certainly, Tiruvalluvar had a personality of his own and only an integrated personality can make for a great poet and great poetry. His unique personality was fostered by Jaina tenets either at a time when Jainism was beginning to find currency in Tamilnadu and so was subject to large corruption as any tenets and principles generally accepted will tend to become corrupt in the course of time, or was holding forth at a time when Jainism was going out of vogue in Tamilnadu, meaning that Valluvar might have lived in either the first century A.D. or in the sixth or seventh century (as the late Vaiyapuri Pillai claimed in his chronology). Scholarly consensus might be sentimental, but has nothing to do with fact or actuality that the 'protest' was Jaina in character.

Tiruvalluvar visualized as a Jaina Acharya

An ancient manuscript of Kural on palm-leaf

CHAPTER : I

Stories and Legends about Tiruvalluvar

His Age, Life and Times

Under Indian, that is to say uncertain, conditions, it is not surprising that we have many stories and legends about the life and circumstance of the poet Tiruvalluvar, but nothing exact or certain, the only thing known about his life being that we know nothing at all about him, all things said and done. Myth and legend builders have been busy, when there is actually nothing to go on and we are not even sure about when the myths and legends began about him. Some started early, and quite a few were heard of for the first time in the middle of the nineteenth century when a somewhat belated attempt to endow him with a complete biography (as it were) was attempted by Ashtavadhanam Pundit Saravana Pillai who exercised his imagination to some purpose and the author of the *Vinoda-rasa-mañjarī* collected these tales into his book giving them currency ever since.

Tiruvalluvar is a major poet, a figure reckonable in certain senses greater even than Kamban—he was at any rate older—and legends and stories should have been busy about him as they were about others. But actually we hear very little of Tiruvalluvar except by his work *Tirukkural* till quite much later. This might be an argument about his having been a Jaina and left to Jaina authors to call from, quote and otherwise deal with the Hindu tradition having nothing at all to do with him trying even to avoid him till it became impossible. This might at best be a sort of negative proof of his Jainism.

The name Valluvar and the sanctifying of it to Tiruvalluvar with the adjective of prosperity or divinity or prosperous divinity *tiru* equivalent to *śrī* in the Sanskrit usage, seems to have not been very familiar from the early days, though we might not

know when the name actually became known more widely. We can hazard a sort of wild guess that it occurred well after the tenth century by which time the danger from Jaina ideas had been put to rest by the general run of the Hindu community.

'Valluvar' is identified as the name of a community of drummers and carriers of messages for kings and rulers, generally thought of as low caste, and not properly within the fold of—large enough as it was—Hinduism. It might signify again that the name thus made popular for the author of the *Kural* indicates his being beyond the actual Hindu fold in origin, probably a Jaina. This again is only a sort of negative argument.

The Jaina tradition seems to have referred to him as Thevar, and sometimes as Nayanār, sometimes adding the Tiruvalluvar to the Nayanār, to make it Tiruvalluvar Nayanār.

Thevar itself is a Jaina sobriquet made familiar to students of Tamil literary tradition by Tirthakka Thevar, author of the much later *Jīvaka cintāmaṇi*, universally recognised as a Jaina epic work which quotes a few sentiments and verses and uses some metaphors used by the author of the *Kural*.

The story about the birth of Tiruvalluvar as the son of two wandering lowcaste people known and identified as Ādi and Bhagavān seems worthy of rejection at sight. The story makes Tiruvalluvar the contemporary of Auvaiyār, Kapilar and others, well known in the Tamil *Saṅgam* tradition for they are also said to be born of the same parents, thus making a great fraternity of all Tamil poets of the days past. These children were born at different places and were, according to the story, abandoned by their parents after being told in chaste Tamil verse by the new born babe that he or she knows how to take care of himself or herself. The story stands to the credit of Tamil learning but unfortunately is a discredit to Tamil literary history in that all great poets of the previous ages are said to be born of the same parents, some stories go so far as to add that the parents were of low caste, and were invariably abandoned. The story might have taken shape as a confession of the ignorance of the Tamil literary historian and scholar as to the origin and background of these poets, one and all. Tiruvalluvar's first stanza in the *Kural* about *Ādi-bhagavān* might have suggested the names for the parents—perhaps an intentional attempt to belittle the Jaina inference about *Ādi-bhagavān* which, however,

is preserved for later generations in poetic vocabularies compiled at that age even by non-Jaina lexicologists.

The idea of the three Tamil *Saṅgams* gained currency round about the seventh or eighth century, getting literary recognition for the first time in a text known as *Iraiyanār Ahapporul* and its commentary. It should have been definitely after this date that Tiruvaḷḷuvar's visit to the *Saṅgam* at Madurai to gain accreditation for his work gained somewhat of currency. The existence of a *Saṅgam* with the physical and learned particulars as its components in Madurai can at best be considered apocryphal and mythical, but quite a prideful mythology. That the *Saṅgam* was expected to set its approval on new and outstanding works was a convenient legend to build up. True, the *Saṅgam* poets as such gained their accreditation by the anthologisers of the age past who, however, are not credited with all of them being members of the *Saṅgams*, first, second or third. Whatever it is, it is very difficult to distinguish between what is fancy and what is factual about any of the *Saṅgams* except that a body of ancient verse exists known to us by that name of *Saṅgam* poems consisting of 27000 lines of these composed by nearly a thousand poets, some named and some unnamed, some women and a large number male.

That the author of *Tirukkural* sought the accreditation of the *Saṅgam* meeting at Madurai under the aegis of the Pāṇḍya king, that the 49 immortals of the *Saṅgam* of the day rejected the work as of a lower order than they were accustomed to, and that Tiruvalluvar placed the work on the plank floating in the Tank of the Golden Lotus are the parts of the story. The plank, it was said, had miraculous properties. It could evidently evaluate great poetry and give space for it to occupy a part of the plank along with other immortal works. But the plank, realising the great worth of *Tirukkural*, upset all the other works and poets seated on it into the tank, carrying proudly only the *Kural* as worth more than any other work of that day and time. It is a wholly worth while conceit about the work known as the *Kural*, future generations have confirmed the great qualities of the *Kural*. But the story can only be a literary conceit, incredible but justifiable in some sort in this particular case. The story cannot be anything but apocryphal, even for those days. The *Saṅgam* poets are said to have immediately accepted the

work, they could not do anything else, having been ignominiously defeated and humbled.

But one aspect of this story seems to cry for credence. The poet who sought the appreciation of the *Saṅgam* for a work done by a teacher of his Elādhi Nayanār was Valluvar, but the work itself was the work of Elādhi. Now, as Prof. A. Chakravarti pertinently points out, one of the many names by which the *ācārya* of Pāṭalipura Śrī Kundakunda was known, was a name Elādhi. This might prove a memorable clue as to the authorship of the work. But to single out one small aspect of a largely mythical story for credence might serve only its opposite end, we have to believe. But the association of the name Elādhi with the *Kural* might have some significance and importance—the right one can only be speculated upon, not proved or taken as proved or disproved in the main.

The accreditation of the *Saṅgam* of the work *Kural* was the occasion of eighteen poets singing the praises of the author and the work according to the story on the spot—a practice which can be evidenced not only in the Tamil world from contemporary source. That they did it without being acquainted with the work at any point might add to the incredibility, for it is a thing which happens in the so called learned world even today. There were eighteen of these stanzas preserved out of the many composed on the new great poet and the verses have come down to us though chronology-conscious scholars like Vaiyapuri Pillai suggest a sort of wholesome disbelief about the whole—the incident, the verses and the authors of them.

Prof. A Chakravarti, in his learned Introduction to his edition of the *Tirukkural* and its Jaina commentary written by Kavirāja Pandithar offers some remarks about these laudatory verses about the poet which I quote in full in the next section, as it might be quite pertinent in our context, though it is only likely that the laudatory verses are wholly apocryphal and legendary.

II

Prof. A Chakravarti writes:

We have to look for evidences (of the life, times, religion etc. of the poet) from the ancient appreciative verses sung by old

Tamil scholars about the work of the author. Of these we select four stanzas by four different scholars.

The first is by the famous Tamil scholar, Nakkeerar. This stanza gives a very interesting information about the author. He is said to be all-knowing; then what he realised, he rendered into Tamil language for the benefit of the people. Emphasising the fact that he adopted the medium of Tamil language for communicating his message for the purpose of enlightening the masses on the eternal subjects, *dhrma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa*, obviously, implies the author was ordinarily writing works in other languages to communicate his spiritual message; in this particular case, for the benefit of the Tamil knowing public who may not be acquainted whith the other language, he chose the Tamil medium for the purpose of communicating his message contained in other works. Otherwise Nakkeerar would not have emphasised choice of Tamil in this case. Further he indicates that what is rendered into Tamil in those four topics such as *dharma, artha, kāma* and *mokṣa.* This clearly implies that these topics were elaborately discussed by the authors in other works in other languages. According to this stanza, the points emphasised therein in common with the Jaina tradition confirm that the author of *Tirukkural* was Elācārya. He wrote a number of books in Prakrit language dealing with Jaina religion and philosophy. Of all these the most important works are three—*Pañcāstikāya-sāra, Pravacana-sāra* and *Samaya-sāra.* These three are jointly called *Prābhṛta-traya.* This name corresponds with the *Praśna-traya* of Hindu culture denoting the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Vedānta-sūtras.* The three works of Kundakunda deal with the three eternal topics, the nature of the world, the nature of man and the consciousness and the nature of the self, the *paramātma-svarūpa.* In this connection it is worth noticing the fact that *Tirukkural* was originally called *Muppal*, work dealing with the three topics, consisting of three parts. Again Nakkeerar emphasises the fact that the author was an all-knowing personality who attained self realisation. That is the implication of the very first phrase in the stanza. This description also fits in with Śrī Kundakunda's life.

Among the Jainas he is known as *Kali-kāla-sarvajña*, the Omniscient being of the Kaliyuga age. Jaina thinkers who came

after the first century A.D. proudly claim to be *Kundakund-ānvaya*, belonging to the spiritual lineage of Śrī Kundakunda or Elācārya. The author of this stanza, Nakkeerar, was one of the great poets of the Tamil *saṅgha* noted for his independence and impartiality. Hence the information obtained from his must be considered highly valuable for our investigation.

The next stanza we take for consideration is by the old poet Mamoolanar. His stanza is very interesting. It clearly shows that there was confusion even in those days of the authorship of the *Kural*. The real author of the work which speaks of the four topics is Thevar. But ignorant people mentioned the name of Valluvar as the author. But wise men will not accept the statement of ignorant fools. Scholars acquainted with Tamil literature will clearly understand that the term *Thevar* is generally used to denote a Jaina ascetic. Nacchinarkiniyar in his commentary on *Jīvaka-cintāmaṇi*, quoting from *Tirukkural* always uses the world Thevar to denote the author. The author of *Jīvaka-cintāmaṇi*, the Tamil *kāvya*, is known as *Tiruttakka Thevar*. The Tamil term *Thevar* as well as the term *Kadavular* are invariably used to denote a great Jaina ascetic. Mamoolanar, the author of this verse evidently knows that the real author is diferent from Valluvar, who is popularly assumed to be the author of this work. What is the reason for such a confusion being present even in the early days of the Christain era? The answer might be and must be obtained from the Jaina tradition. Elācārya was a great *nirgrantha mahāmuni*, a great Digambara ascetic, not caring for worldly honours. His lay disciple was delegated to introduce the work to the scholars assembled in the Madura *Saṅgha*. Hence the introduction was by Valluvar who placed it before the scholars of the Mudura *Saṅgam* for approval.

The vicarious introduction of the work was evidently the reason for the confusion even in the early days as to the authorship of the work. Since Mamoolanar was in the know of the real things he ridicules the confusion born of ignorance of facts.

Next we shall take up the stanza associated with Nalkurvelviyar. The stanza refers to two great scholars. One went to northern India, there he married one Upakeśī and became a great scholar, has to be considered the axis of northern culture. The other turned towards the South and became famous in the

south Indian culture in the Pāṇḍya kingdom. The important phrases in this stanza are one who married Upakeśī and the other is *Matha-anubhangi* Recent Tamil scholars who interpreted these two phrases have made a mess of the whole thing. Their interpretation is fantastic and uniforming. Upakeśī is interpreted to be the sister of Viṣṇu and he who married her is said to be Śiva. Why Śiva should be associated with the axis of Sanskrit culture is not quite clear. Why of the two heroes one should be made divine and the other a human being is equally unintelligible. We have to proceed on the assumption that we are able to find that the two phrases refer to two great scholars, one famous in Sanskrit literature and the other famous in Tamil literature. One who went to the North who married Upakeśī and became famous in Sanskrit literature is undoubtedly a reference to the great grammarian Vararuci. This Vararuci's life is given in Somadeva's *Kathā-sarit-sāgara*. He went to the North, became famous as a great Sanskrit grammarian and married Upakeśī, the daughter of Upavarṣa. That he was a scholar from the South, we learn from the great grammarian Patañjali, who wrote the *Mahābhāṣya* on the *Pāṇini-sūtras*. Referring to Vararuci, he refers to him as a great scholar from the South. There can be no doubt that he is referred to in this Tamil stanza as the scholar who went towards the North, who married Upakeśī and who became famous as the axis of Sanskrit culture.

Now let us turn our attention to the other personality who became famous as the axis of Tamil culture in the Pāṇḍya kingdom. The phrase referring to this author is rather intriguing. The Tamil phrase is *Matha-anubhangi*, which is also interpreted in the fantastic way as one who follows in the maternal instinct, and so on. We have to reject this interpretation. All that we know is that the phrase refers to the author of the Tirukkural, because the Tamil scholars have always identified this with the name of Tiruvalluvar, which term evidently means the author of the *Tirukkural* for our purpose. We have only to enquire how this phrase came to mean the author of *Tirukkural*. The phrase really consists of three parts—*matha*, *anu* and *bangi*. The first part *maatha* we shall reserve for the present. The other two terms *anu* and *bangi* are really interesting and informing. The prefix *anu* is generally found in Jaina technical terms. Jaina

āgama literature is generally classified under four groups: *Pratham-ānuyoga*, *Karaṇ-ānuyoga*, *Caraṇ-ānuyoga* and *Dravy-ānuyoga*. The term *anuyoga* with the prefix *anu* has thus a clear significance of Jaina *āgama* literature. Similarly the term *ānupūrvī* occupying in the term *gatyānupūrvī* technically refers to a certain class of *karman*, which determines the next birth of the *jīva*. Similarly we have to assume that this prefix *anu* is associated with a technical term relating to Jaina philosophy. The fundamental doctrine of Jaina metaphysics is the doctrine of *asti-nāsti*, synthetic identity of thesis and antithesis. This doctrine is otherwise known as *Sapta-bhaṅgī* or *Bhaṅgī* in short. Hence the term *anubaṅgī* means obviously the doctrine relating to *Bhaṅgī*, *Sapta-bhangī* or *Asti-nāsti-vāda*. Hence the whole phrase must have been *Mathānubhangi*, the follower of the *Sapta-bhaṅgī*. Thus we should have to assume that *Matānu-bhaṅgī* has been changed to *Mathānubhangi* and the elongation of the vowel in the beginning is due to poetic necessity. Or we may explain the phrase in another way. The term must have been originally evidently *Vāthānubhangi* and somebody who copied from the palmleaf manuscript must have made the mistake of making *va* into *ma*. Such common errors occur very often in transcribing manuscripts. According to this interpretation the phrase could mean, one who is the follower of *Anu-bhaṅgī-vāda*. Probably this is the more accurate interpretation of the phrase; for the term *vāda* is used to describe the different philosophical schools of thought. In the Tamil work *Nīlakeśī*, the chapters are referred to as the *Bauddha-vāda-caruka*, *Sāṅkhya-vāda-caruka*, *Veda-vāda-caruka*, *Ājīvaka-vāda-caruka* etc. Similarly this school of thought was probably called *Anu-bhaṅgi-vāda*. Hence *Vād-ānu-bhaṅgī* came to mean one whose philosophy is based on *Sapta-bhaṅgī* doctrine or *Asti-nāsti-vāda* which would mean naturally a follower of Jaina philosophy of *Sapta-bhaṅgī*, *Syād-vāda* and *anekānta*.

Next we take up the stanza by Kalladar. Here is a distinct reference to the Jaina philosophy of *Anekānta-vāda*. Speaking about these traditional *darśanas*, he points out that they are conflicting with one another. However one system says the ultimate reality is one, another system will contradict this, and say no. This mutual incompatibility of the six systems is pointed out and the philosophy of the *Kural* is praised to be free from

this defect of onesidedness. The conflict among the *darśanas* is due to the point of view adopted by each. A particular aspect of reality is over-emphasised by one system and thus obtains an account of the range of reality which will be inconsistent with the account given by another system. Jaina thinkers have pointed out this defect in other systems. They condemn such systems as *Ekānta-vādas*. They emphasise the importance of taking up of different aspects of reality in order to give a complete account of its nature. Failure to adopt this attitude would only result in partial and erroneous description of the nature of reality similar to the description of the elephant in the fable given by different blind men each according to his personal experience. Such a system which avoids partial description of reality and emphasises all the importance of all aspects according to the point of view adopted by these systems are necessarily taken into account by *Anekānta-vāda*. Hence a thinker who adopts this universal attitude of *Anekānta-vāda* cannot be easily classified under any group of thinkers. Selections from these systems will be taken up by each individual system—system of thought which may claim *an-ek-ānta* account, to be a faithful description of that particular system alone. This universality is the characteristic of the great Tamil work *Kural*; no wonder that it is claimed by each of the different systems to be a faithful representation of that particular system. Our attitude in this matter is purely scientific and historical. In establishing that this work is an exposition of thought from this *Anekānta-vāda* point of view and that this author was the follower of this faith of Universal Love or *Ahiṁsā* should not be claimed or interpreted as the claim of the narrowminded zealot. The correct interpretation of evidence available, both internal and circumstantial, must be the necessary attitude of any student of science. That is the only motive that guides us in our research. True value of any particular proposition does not depend upon the social or the official status occupied by the person who makes the statement. A scientific statement cannot rest on such a personal statement, or such a personal authority. Its validity must entirely depend upon an objective evidence. The force of such objective evidence will constrain every thinker to accept the implication of force upon such evidence whether the result is appealing to his personal like or not. Personal likes and dislikes have no place

in historical or scientific research. These remarks we are forced to make in this connection because recently such pronouncement by very highly placed individuals were made relating to this great Tamil classic, thus giving expression to personal opinion utterly unsupported by, and inconsistent with, available evidence.

So far the learned Prof. A. Chakravarti, he has taken four of the 18 stanzas available from the laudatory verses said to have been composed by the poets present at the acceptance of the work miraculously and against learned opinion by the *Saṅgam.* These observations make clear certain points about the confusion of the name of the author, the title of the work itself, the characteristic universality of its approach and the other points that evidently are debatable endlessly. *Tiruvalluvamaalai* itself might be, however, a wholly spurious work; the poets who have obviously the names of well known *Saṅgam* poets like Nakkeerar and others might be "duplicates" or pseudo poets of some kind or the other which abounded in the Tamil learned world, then as now. But the observations of Prof. Chakravarti are valid in so far as they clear some points about Tiruvalluvar and his work, the *Kural,* though they do it only within the narrow context of these verses of somewhat dubious origin and somewhat illusory timeliness. The *Vādānu-baṅgī* argument as well as the universality of the text of the *Kural* are such as warrant out taking note of what the Jaina scholar says with regard to the *Kural.*

III

We have by no means exhausted the legends and stories currently bruited about on the subject of Valluvar and his life.

Perhaps because he described the ideal wife as the helpmate of the householder in such detail in many places in his work, the *Kural,* legend has given him a wife, and even named her, Vāsuki. He has talked with brilliance and love of man's offspring but popular imagination has not gone so for as to endow him with a son who was famous, because it was, perhaps, impossible to do so.

Vāsuki, the wife, was all that a wife should be. Two stories have come down about her that might be worth noting, not be-

cause they shed any particular light on the life of the author of the *Kural* but because they describe the ideal wife.

One day when the wife was drawing water from the well in the backyard, the husband called out to her, and she immediately ran to attend to him and to his wants. The bucket, or vessel, being dropped into the well, stood where it was at the moment of her leaving the rope, till she came back—a miracle indeed in line with the verse in the *Kural* which says that "The wife who worships no God but her husband and rises in the morning praising her Lord, the rains fall at her bidding!"

The other story, equally apocryphal for there is no warrant for it is about the death bed of the great poet. Lying on his death bed—the story asserts that the wife outlived the man and she well might have—Tiruvalluvar, looking at his wife asked her whether she would like to ask him anything, now that he was departing from this world. And the wife who had been puzzled by one action of her husband for a long time, asked him "Why did you keep a needle by your leaf whenever you sat down to eat; that has been puzzling me, and I want to know, if you can tell me." Tiruvalluvar smiled and replied, "I kept a needle by my leaf to retrieve any stray grains of rice which, by your carelessness in serving me, might have strayed from the leaf. But unlike most husbands in the world, I have had no occasion to use it at all!" It was mutually complimentary; the wife was careful of her husband's comfort and presence and so was the husband who instead of chiding her was ready to right any careless act of hers!

A third legendary story makes of Valluvar a master-draftsman, a weaver of note and skill. On what this story is based, it is difficult to guess. But he himself is full of praise for the tiller of the soil, for as he says, that "the tillers of the soil come first in the world and others come after them, following them in his wake." He had a high sense of his destiny as poet for he calls "the makers of poems the tillers of the field of the minds of men and the users of words as the sowers of seeds in a readied field." The *Kural* talks at various places and under various chapters about wealth, the making of wealth, and the inhibiting nature of poverty. From all of which we might conclude that the author was talking from experience and had been by turns, both poor and rich in his life—at best a specious argument, for the

Kural is not a book of personal experiences but a book of moral abstractions reduced to a kind of proverbial universal wisdom.

But it has to be noted that, alone among the ancient poets of India, Valluvar gives material prosperity its place in mortal life. "Heaven will be denied to those who have no virtuous qualities; this earth and its fruits will be denied to those who have no material prosperity," he says. He is sure that "wealth could be made by righteous means", an assertion that betrays that Valluvar the poet lived in times that were better, in certain senses, than ours. But he was aware of dangers even in his times. He asserts that "those who prosper under an evil ruler should themselves be evil!"

It is difficult to say from the internal evidence in the *Kural* as to what Tiruvalluvar was in the absence of external or circumstantial evidence. He might have been a tiller of the soil, the first of men; he might have been even a trader. But if the identification of Valluvar as Elācārya (Śrī Kundakunda) is correct he might be considered the *ācārya* af a certain group of Jainas in his time and a religionist of great standing and understanding, a scholar with a predilection for the creative use of the word in three languages at least, Prakrit, Sanskrit and Tamil, Tamil being at the beginning of its literary glories, Valluvar himself having generated some of the glories of the Tamil language and literature as adequate expression.

IV

There is one other legend of much more recent origin that has to be disposed of before we turn to a consideration of the times of Valluvar in the next section. The story came into being with the remarks of Rev. G.U Pope who found some Christian sentiments in the *Kural* which he immediately singled out for himself and offered the opinion that the author of the *Kural* should have come into contact with the Christian Apostle, doubting Thomas, who is legendarily said to have worked in Mylapore and met his martyrdom there

The story of Saint Thomas in Mylapore is apocryphal at best, though it might be true as well, only sufficient material is not available, and it is doubtful whether any more material will likely be available on the matter.

Tiruvalluvar also is associated with Mylapore, again only apocryphally though, there is no material evidence of it to be found anywhere. And both belong, legendarily though, to the first century A.D.

It is, apocryphally, possible that the two Saints did meet and influence each the other.

If Valluvar was a lowcaste man, it is quite probable, considering later historical example of Indian Christian service and work among the traditional lowcastes of south India that Saint Thomas might have striven for the conversion of the very group to which Tiruvalluvar himself belonged. If on the other hand, Tiruvalluvar was a recognised Jaina *ācārya* of those days with a philosophical training and attitude of mind as is most likely he might have profitted to a certain extent by some Christian doctrines alien indeed to Hindu theology, but akin in certain respects of humanism and love and grace to Jainism. The love of others, *ahiṁsā*, as a doctrine prescribes that "One should do unto others as one would like to be done by." Show the other cheek to the evil doer instead of doing him wrong might be another principle that might have suited the Jainas and which the Jaina practised even more than ever the Christians of later days, with all apologies to the Apostles, did. "Turning the other cheek" indicates that one is willing to suffer any amount of pain oneself instead of inflicting pain on others in retaliation!

The identification of phrases like the man who "Conquered the five senses" will under Indian conditions apply more to the Jaina *munis* and the Tīrthaṅkaras than to Jesus Christ. And if we identify the "grace" of Valluvar with the Christian "grace", it might again be considered far-fetched, though grace is an idea commonly used in all higher mystical reaches, universally, all over the world, wherever men were subject to higher religious thinking and reasoning.

And above all, the negation of Christianity can be identified in Valluvar in his description of offspring. The Christian doctrine was imbued with "guilt" incurred by man even in birth colouring all their moral attitude to sexual relations between man and woman, and taking it deep into the psyche colouring it Christianity, till the Jew from Vienna, Freud, freed the colouring somewhat by his theories of libido and love. Nowhere in the *Kural* do we come across the idea of guilt about sex. In fact, he

devoted a whole book of his *Kural* to *Kāma,* Love, premarital love and the coming together of lovers in somewhat conventional but glorious terms. Even earlier, talking of offspring, he talks as if he thought that to be born a man was noble, attended by no guilty feelings of any kind. Perhaps instead of summarising, I can quote the short ten-verse chapter on offspring in full to bring home the force with which Valluvar glorifies human off-spring.

On Good Offspring

1. The greatest of benefits that can accrue to man in the world is the benefit of good offspring.
2. If a man have goodly cultured sons in this world, he will be blessed for seven lives to come.
3. Sons are the only true wealth that a man might have. They are born to him as a result of the good deeds he did in a previous birth.
4. Food which has been touched by the tender fingers of his son is nectar to the father.
5. It delights the physical being of man to touch his son; it delights the father when he hears the son lisp words into his ear.
6. Only those who have heard their tender son's lispings can know how sweet the sound can be. Others will claim that the harp and flute are sweeter.
7. Even the most powerful man on earth will feel gratified when he is told that his son is more famous than he himself is.
8. The mother when she hears her son praised is prouder than she brought him forth into the world.
9. The best that a father can do by his son is to equip him with learning enough to stand up in the company of learned men.
10. The best that a son can do by his father is to make others wonder what good deeds of merit his father should have done to have him for son.

The praise of offspring, especially sons, and the terms in which the thing is done with reference to good deeds and past life, and in the context of learning, and the like will be enough

to inform the reader of the *Kural* that, even if he had heard the Christian doctrines preached by no less a person than the Apostle of Christ himself, Valluvar was a Jaina by birth as well as by conviction.

Apocryphal though it might be, there might have been a chance of both Saints meeting, for, God, whether Indian or Christian, of those or these times, works by mysterious ways. The *Kural* poet might have profitted by listening to a few Christian doctrines and, even if not fully adopting them, might have used them in the making of the *Kural.* One can detect Christian, as well as other strains, in the *Kural.* All the better for the author who, though he should have subscribed to some religion in his living days, did not bigottedly refuse to listen to other religions and other doctrines of a useful kind. This is the universality of the author of the *Kural* which makes it more than a Jaina work of morals, a work of universal ideals and morals. All credit to the author, for being a better Jaina, by being more universal than most.

Finally, one should offer the suggestion that these legends and apocryphal stories should not be dismissed as wholly lies and baseless and so untrue. As Valluvar himself says, "It is good to accept truth, as each one sees it, in whatever manner brought forth." Each legend and story has its own place and, in the absence of a really historical series of evidence, offers us a bit of material to reconstruct the personality of the poet with. This is a useful service that legends and myths perform in the Indian context where, for a long time, we have had no historical perspective, or sense, of time or events. But we do get an image of Valluvar as a person form many of these stories, which are all of them worth pondering about but not enough to base any of our certain conclusions on. In this matter Tiruvalluvar is in the good company, the company of most of the religious thinkers, great writers, heroes of various kinds, that India produced in ancient and medieval times.

By retelling these legends and apocrypha, I have not exhaused by any means the stories current about Tiruvalluvar. There is a lot more material of this kind, all of it worth noting each in its place, but enough has been said to establish the importance of the literary persence and personality known as Tiruvalluvar, the author of the *Kural.*

V

The age in which the author of the *Kural*, Tiruvalluvar, lived is as much a subject of controversy as his religion. And for over a hundred years, if not for more, Tamil scholars have written accusing each other of bias, partiality, all the tricks of unlearnedness, about establishing the age of the author.

In this matter, the late S. Vaiyapuri Pillai has had more than his due share of vituperation, for his daring to bring the date of Tiruvalluvar to the sixth century A. D. after the *Saṅgam* anthologies had appeared. He argues learnedly and meticulously, as is usual with him, from word usages, word endings and from a preconcluded idea that the author was indebted to many Sanskrit works which he had studied and taken parts from them to put into his own words in the *Kural.*

The sixth century as the probable date of Tiruvalluvar would agree with certain speculative and circumstantial facts. By the sixth century, the age of Jainism and Jaina ascendancy in Tamilnadu, had almost begun to give way to a larger orthodox Hinduism, spearheaded by the poets of devotion in Tamil. In such a case, the apocryphal story of Valluvar being *persona non grata* with the *Saṅgam* scholars and poets at Madurai might be considered compatible. If he belonged to the first century, there is no way of explaining the hostility of the Madurai *Saṅgam* to the poet on the ground of his Jainism only. The final fact of the traditions about Tiruvalluvar and the Tamil *Saṅgam* claims that it was Tiruvalluvar and his work which jointley upset and overthrew the *Saṅgam* at Madurai. All these are however apocryphal material and much credence might not be placed in them, whatever our bias.

Vaiyapuri Pillai who accepts the Vajranandi *Saṅgam* as Jaina in origin and concept and denies the longer historicity of the other three *Saṅgams* is inclined to place the Vajranandi *Saṅgam* at Pāṭalipura, modern Cuddalore, in the sixth century. Though there might be nothing to connect Valluvar with the Vajranandi-*saṅgha* it is quite likely that the references to the Madurai Tamil *Saṅgam* should have come to an end with Vajranandi-*saṅgha.* He is also of opinion that the work and scope of the Vajranandi-*saṅgha* in regard to Jaina literature was the inspiration of the legendary stories about the Tamil *Saṅgams* which themselves

gained currency after the *Irayanaar Ahapporul Urai* came into being, sometimes after the seventh, or eighth centuries.

Unlike the late Vaiyapuri Pillai, most Tamil scholars consider that a date prior to that assigned to Valluvar by him is possible and the general opinion seems to be that he belonged to the first century A.D. Though there might be other scholars who try to assign even a greater antiquity to the *Kural* placing it in the second or third millennium B.C. if not even earlier. The first century A.D. might be all the more acceptable as there seems to have been a tradition of dating the years of a given Tiruvalluvar are from the birth of Valluvar. Though there is no means of assuring ourselves when this tradition started exactly, it seems to be current for over a couple of centuries; there is no means of knowing on that authorities the originators of the Valluvar era based themselves. Most scholarly opinion seems to place Tolkappiyar first in the tradition, and Valluvar second, though a work of professed grammar as a predecessor to literature might suggest a kind of organised protest of some kind against existing grammar and literary effort on that grammar. I am inclined to think of this as a more or less Jaina protest against prevailing orthodox Hindu Vedic conventions of literature somewhat at the beginning of the classical age of Sanskrit. The Jaina protest seems to have influenced the mainstream of Sanskrit imperialist literary output of the times in the course of the centuries. Speculatively, it could be argued that the existence of anthologies as the first creative effort of the period and the precedence of grammar to creative literary effort, might prove such a staged protest against things obtaining.

The Hindus had linked their religious advance with the use of Sanskrit language for religious and other purpose slowly extending the use of the language in worldly matters also. Buddhists who were forced to adopt another language as a vehicle for their religious and metaphysical speculations were using Pali for that purpose. In a similar manner, the Jainas, fighting for their survival in a hostile world of religions were forced to use Prakrit largely and in Tamilnadu and Karnataka country, used the local regional dialects with effectiveness lifting them from spoken to literary use by their own efforts at creative consciously produced conditions for literary expression. The Jainas were first and formost interested in religion, but

secondarily, they were interested in the literary use of the language they used, taking it from the marketplace as it were. This might to a great extent explain why a Jaina *ācārya* like Śrī Kundakunda should opt to compose a whole literary work of a lay kind like the *Kural* in the Tamil language. His major religious work were in the Prakrit language, while some others might have been conceivably in Sanskrit. This idea might be wholly in consonance with the idea that in the first century A.D. Tamil achieved its status as a literary language, whether it took shape in the forms we have them in the next few generations and whether *Tolkappiyam* itself came into being just after the *Kural,* or before it, both of which might be considered possible. And all this is consonant with the poet of the *Kural* having lived in the first century A.D.

A work like the *Kural* has more to do with the lay general public just aware of Jaina moral ideals, and perhaps willing to consider some of them for use in their daily lives. The Jaina ascetic might have got on, whatever the conditions—he was inured to ill treatment, misunderstanding by the public and sometimes even to physical chastisement. But the laymen who had to live with other religionists, had to be prepared for the acceptance of the larger humanistic ideals of Jainism. Unlike other religious moral codes the Jaina code of morality and *dharma* was more universal, more universally applicable, fortunately. And in this, again, speculatively we might offer even a reason why a particular saint, Jaina or otherwise, should be interested in writing a work like the *Kural.*

The idea of such a work in the first century A.D. in Tamilnadu was just possible. The Jainas had came into south India and Tamilnadu long before the famine in the Mauryan times which made a group of them go south into Karnataka and work for the religious and literary upsurge in that region and the country. No such concentration had happened in Tamilnadu prior to that date, though the Jainas evidently, on their way to Ceylon and other places, were familiar to the Tamils. But by the first century, assuming that small groups of Jainas had come into Tamilnadu, the socalled *Saṅgam* poems refer to them and their activities, religious and secular in the early years of the Christian era, and some of the rulers themselves had opted to follow Jaina doctrines. Such an atmosphere might have

posed the problem of making the Jaina ideals known to a larger lay public, not merely Jaina, and so religiously interested, but to the common people interested in Jaina ideals of humanism and the moral law.

VI

Accepting the first century as his age it would be well to look into the claims that Prof. A. Chakravarti makes for an identification that has not been generally acceptable to most Tamil scholars, though they have made no other claims as yet. In stating the claims of Prof. Chakravarti nothing can be better than to offer them in the words of Prof. Chakravarti himself.

I am quoting the relevant section from his Introduction in English to the Tamil commentary by Kavirāja Pandithar on the *Tirukkural*.

Basing himself on the Jaina tradition, attributing the work *Kural* to Śrī Kundakunda Ācārya and taking it as further proof of such authorship the association of Elācārya with the *Kural*, Elācārya being one of the known pseudonyms of the said Śrī Kundakunda Ācārya, Prof. A. Chakravarti observes:

"The age of our author can be determined from the various *paṭṭ-āvalis* of the *ācārya-paramparās* available to scholars. Professor R. Hoernle examined such a *paṭṭ-āvali* in the *Indian Antiquary*, Vols. XX and XXI. We have clear evidence furnished in the several *paṭṭ-āvali* preserved by the Jainas both Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras. After Mahāvīra there were a number of *ācāryas* whose names and years do not matter for us. But they account for 468 years after Mahāvīra when three minor *aṅgins* succeeded. The first Sudharman had a pontificate of six years, Yaśodhara 18 and Bhadrabāhu II was pontiff for nearly 23 years after having become pontiff in 53 B.C.; he was a Brahmin by caste and died in his 77th year. He was succeeded by Guptigṛha in 31 B.C. after having been monk for 34 years becoming potiff in his 56th year, dying when he was 66. He was a Panwar by caste as the Digambara *paṭṭ-āvali* has preserved. He was succeeded by Māghanandin in 21 B.C. who was 44 years of age when called. He was a Shah by caste. Jinacandra who succeeded him as pontiff in 17 B.C. died in his 65th year after having been pontiff for nearly nine years. He was succeeded by Kundakunda

whose caste does not seem to be found in the *pațț-āvali* who succeeded to the pontificate in 8 B.C. He had been householder for 11 years, a monk for 33 years and pontiff for nearly 52 years, dying at the ripe old age of 95 years 10 months and 15 days. He had four other names by which he was known, namely Padma-nandin, Vakra-grīvā, Gṛddha-piccha and Elācārya. So that date of Kundakunda, otherwise the author of the *Kural*, would be, considering that he was 44 years of age when he became pontiff, 52 B.C. to 44 A.D. spanning almost a century covering the whole of the first half of the First Christian century."

This might make it that the author of the *Kural* was dead a decade or two before Saint Thomas arrived on the scene at Mylapore. The date of martyrdom of Saint Thomas is given variously as 52 A.D. and any year after that up to 60, or 62 A.D. If the earliest date is correct he might have missed the author of the *Kural* by a few months only. The genealogy and years of Indian hierarchy are those worked out by Prof. R. Hoernle.

The learned Prof. A. Chakravarti has this to offer about the author in respect of the country or region in which he lived:

The author of the *Kural* is known in Tamilnadu by his more familiar name Elācārya. From the *pațț-āvalis*, as shown earlier, we see that he was chosen as the president, or pontiff, of the Jaina *saṅgha*, at south Pāṭalipura, now knwon as Thirup-pappuliyur, a suburb of Cuddalore. There is a small hill near Wandiwash where he performed his *tapas*, till the last moment of his life, and it is an important place of pilgrimage for south Indian Jainas. In Mylapore, Madras also there was a Jaina *saṅgha* about the first century B.C. and the author of *Tirukkural* is associated with this place also. From these facts, it is clear that he belonged to the Tamil land ordinarily known as Thonda-mandalam which is the territory between the two Pennars, the Southern and Northern Pennars. Hence he must have been a native of these regions. He is a great authority on Jaina philosophy and Jaina religion. As already pointed out, he worte several books in Prakrit. His only Tamil work is the *Kural* which was known originally as *Muppaal*—Three Parts. This term is in conformity with his own three works called *Prābṛta-traya* which term corresponds to the *Praśna-traya* of the Hindus.

The times, the authorship and the origins of the author of

Kural, in spite of the efforts of the learned author, cannot be certainly said to be firmly established beyond any doubt, for enough evidence is not available. But analytically and speculatively, it can be conceded that Prof. A. Chakravarti has made many of his points and the final and inescapable identification of Kundakunda Ācārya as the author of the *Kural* in Tamil awaits further proof. But when all the facts are known, it is quite likely that Prof. Chakravarti was not far wrong in his identification of the author of the *Tirukkural* as Kundakunda Ācārya who long occupied the pontiffs throne at Pāṭaliputra or at Mylapore and wrote other works in Prakrit but none else in Tamil. The Jaina tradition itself asserts that, apart from his purely religious works, he wrote a book of codes for behaviour for lay Jainas and the temptation to identify the book with the Jaina inspired *Muppāl* or *Kural* of the Tamils is certainly there, all things said and done. There is no bigotry involved in proving whether the author of the *Kural* was Kundakunda Ācārya or not; the suggestion is that, given the time, circumstances, and the region attributed to him, it might be or seems to be a likely and satisfactory conclusion. But one thing is quite certain; the author of the *Kural* was undoubtedly a Jaina, either practising the Jaina faith by hereditary right being born into the Jaina religion, or was a student of and convert to Jaina practices and principles, especially the moral code which he explained so well for the nonlearned of the world—and not only the Jainas.

VII

There is evidently another factor, or aspect, of the matter not at all touched upon by scholars, not even by Prof. Chakravarti, while attempting to establish the identity of the author of the *Kural* as the Jaina pontiff, Śrī Kundakundācārya. This is an important common sense attitude on the matter which I would like to talk upon and come to some conclusions using some of the historical evidence that Prof. Chakravarti himself has brought together in the historical Introduction to his Jnanpith edition of *Pañcāstikāya-sāra*- the building of the cosmos—a work in Prakrit written by Śrī Kundakundācārya.

The *Kural* Consists of moral maxims, in brief, effective, in proverbial form, addressed to the ordinary men living in the

day to day world. It offers excellent, almost easily recognizable, Jaina instruction on how to live by good morals, how to live a complete life of usefulness, both in the material and religious and spiritual world, but more in the first two worlds covering various areas and ideas. The spiritual and religious gain an upper hand on the moral as when the author says "when you earn wealth by righteous means you serve yourself materially in this world but you are sure of reaching the other world" evidently of Heaven which might be interpreted as spiritual or religious instruction though of a somewhat tenuous kind.

An idealist, a humanist, a moralist, like the author of the *Kural* might in reason be expected to be interested in directing the steps of the ordinary man, the householders, his neighbours, on the excellent moral path he himself has found serviceable and righteous, by all considerations. But there are large sections of the book known as the *Kural* related to what might be called public affairs, the ruling of a kingdom. If we look at the second book of *Kural* which is entitled *Porut-pall*, the making of material worldliness, we find whole chapters assigned to kings, rulers and men set over ordinary men—how they should choose ministers and spies, or how they should promote friendships and enmities and how they should order their behaviour to be exemplary rulers, or how they should behave in public, abstain from alcoholic drink, punish the evil doers, cultivate learning, promote those worthy, etc. At a conservative estimate more than 500 maxims or *kural*s are directed towards ordering the behaviour of rulers and others set above men. Of these 500 *kurals* some 300 might be used in the context of private individuals also who might never find occasion to be public men, but more than a couple of hundred *kurals* are decisively addressed towards the wise ordering of a ruler's day to day public behaviour.

No one, certainly no Tamil scholar, has so far set about enquiring about how, or why, the author of the *Kural* should have addressed himself, thus, to a ruler. Rulers are notorious persons who give gifts to the poets who call on them and, when convenient, listen to them. Otherwise the rulers have nothing to do with poets. There is no record, apocryphal or real, distant or suggested, of the author of the *Kural* having been a votary at any public court of a king or ruler of his day. This is a prob-

lem on which we have to exercise our minds little, even if others have not.

To say that the author of the *Kural* was just indulging in a few theoretical statements about rulers would not do. He was quite earnest about it, as can be evidenced by even present day ministers and public men in Tamilnadu, going to the *Kural* to justify, or forecast, their actions, whenever they could. Such a practical man as the auther of the *Kural* proves himself to be by his down-to-earth advice about things would not have been wasting his time indulging in a vain-glorious fit of vanity, showing off his learning, almost to no purpose. It is evident, considering the high seriousness of mind and purpose of Tiruvalluvar that the author of the *Kural* should have had an actual ruler in mind whom he was addressing in these verses.

I think that Tamil scholars have so far failed to search for evidence of a ruler of some kind whom Tiruvalluvar might have had in mind. The *Artha-śāstra* was written for a given purpose with a ruler in mind. In like manner, if it were possible, if we were to show some ruler in the mind of the author of the *Kural* we might be serving him better than by merely speculating about his being a Jaina or otherwise, where he was born, and when, and the like. Some of these questions also might be answered by positing and finding such evidence of a ruler whom author of the *Kural* might have had in mind as a disciple. In this matter Prof. A. Chakravarti in his historical Introduction to Kundakundacharya's Prakrit work, gives us a clue which we might take up speculatively, subject to more proofs being found or forthcoming. I quote form the said Introduction, leaving out some matters which are merely repetitions.

He establishes the age of Śrī Kundakunda Ācārya and traces his date of birth as 52 B.C. and the date of his death as A.D. 44. And quoting traditional Jaina biographies of the *ācārya*, he tries to trace the place of birth and his living. "The only reliable information we are able to get from the two traditional accounts of Kundakunda available seems to suggest that he belonged to the *Dakṣiṇa-deśa*. Turning to circumstantial evidence, he believes that emphasis must be based on the fact that Kundakunda belonged to the *Dakṣiṇa-saṅgha*. Referring to an unpublished manuscript about a female disciple of Elācārya (which is another name for Kundakunda) Prof. Chakra-

varti finds evidence to support the following. The female disciple according to the verse was possessed by a *Brahma-rākṣasa.* She would get up on the summit of a small hill called Nīlagiri by the side of the village Hemagrāma in which Elācārya lived and would laugh and weep alternatively with all hysterical violence. She is said to have been cured by Elācārya. Fortunately, we are able to identify all the places mentioned in the *śloka*. Malaya is the part of the (old) Madras Presidency comprised by portions of South and North Arcot Districts, traversed by the Eastern Ghats. The Taluka of Kallakurichi, Tiruvannamalai and Wandiwash perhaps form the central tract of this Malaya. Hemagrāma which is the Sanskritised form of Ponnur is a village near Wandiwash. Close to the village there is a hillock called Nīlagiri. On the top of this hillock, on a rock, there are even now the foot-prints of Elācārya who is said to have performed his *tapas* thereon. Even now pilgrims frequent this village, once a year, to perform *pūjā* to the footprints. Further the *śloka* mentions Elācārya to be *Draviḍa-gaṇ-ādhīśa*. We know that Elācārya was another name by which *Śrī* Kundakundācārya was known, and so the epithet, *Draviḍa-gaṇ-ādhīśa*, is correct.

"According to the Jaina tradition, this Elācārya is the author of the great Tamil classic *Tirukkural.* According to the Jaina tradition, this work was composed by Elācārya and given away to his disciple, Tiruvalluvar, who introduced it to the Madurai *saṅgha.* This version is not altogether improbable, because even the non-Jaina tradition about the author of *Tirukkural* appears to be another version of this one. The Hindu tradition makes Tiruvalluvar himself the author of the work. He is claimed to be a Śaivite by faith and Valluvar by birth. His birth-place is said to be Tirumylai or the modern Mylapore, the southern part of the city of Madras. The work was composed under the patronage of one Elāla-siṁha who was evidently the literary patron of Tiruvalluvar.

"This Elāla-siṁha of the Hindu tradition may be merely a variation of Elācārya. No other Elāla-siṁha is known to history at that time, as ruler or as literary personality. Tiruvalluvar figures in both the traditions, in one as the author, in the other as the introducer before the Madurai Tamil *saṅgha.* The Mylapuri had a famous Jaina temple dedicated to Neminātha (*vide*

Tamil work *Tirunurruanthathi*) and that it was a seat of Jaina culture is well evidenced by literary remains and antiquarian facts preserved in south India. Though the work is claimed by different religionists, Śaivites, Buddhists and Jainas, though there is no authentic record as to the faith of the author, still an unbiassed study of the work itself with the special view as to the technical terms employed in the couplets and the doctrines, religion and moral embodied in the work will constrain one to conclude that it is a treatise evidently based upon the moral principle of *Vīta-rāga*, the cornerstone of Jainism. The praise of agriculture as the noblest occupation is consistent with the tradition of the Vellalas, the landed aristocracy of south India, who were evidently the earliest adherents to the Jaina faith in this part of the country.

This identification of Elācārya, the author of the *Kural*, with Elācārya or Kundakunda would place the Tamil work in the first century A.D.

All these scattered facts of traditions and literary remains produce evidence to establish that our author was of Draviḍian origin, that he was the leader of the Draviḍian *saṅgha* and that he was evidently highly cultured in more than one language. This use of the word Draviḍa in the Draviḍa *saṅgha* must have a specific reference to the Jainas of South India. The Vellalas of ancient Tamil literature strictly followed *kolla-vratham*, the *ahiṁsā* doctrine of non-killing; and it is further evidenced by the popular use of the word in the compound. Draviḍa Brahmins are strict vegetarians as contrasted with Gauḍa Brahmins. It is a well known fact that the strict vegetarianism of the south Indian Brahmins who nevertheless perform *yajñas* involving animal sacrifice is a heritage from early Jaina culture.

"The early kingdoms of south India were the Ceras, the Pāṇḍyas and the Colas and the Pallavas. It is a well-known historical fact pertaining to south India that Pāṇḍyas were Jainas and were patrons of Jainism. They changed their faith only during the Śaivite revival, effected by Appar and Sundarar in the 8th century. That the Ceras were also Jainas can be inferred from *Śilapadhikāram*, another great Tamil classic written by a Jaina scholar, the younger brother of the Cera king. The Colas were also off and on patrons of Jainas, though, in later days, they were associated with Śaivism. These three

kingdoms were known about the time of Aśoka. The court language in all the three was probably Tamil. Can we suppose that Śrī Kundakunda belonged to any of these three kingdoms? In none of the known genealogies of these three kingdoms do we find any name resembling that of the ruler who patronised Śrī Kundakunda and for whom the works were written in Prakrit. Prakrit was the language of none of them. Though Drāviḍa, the great ācārya did not write any work in Tamil except the *Kural*. The three Prakrit works mention a ruler by name, Śivakumāra Mahārāja. Though named Śivakumāra Mahārāja, he should have been of Jaina faith There are attempts at identifying the Śivakumāra Mahārāja with the early Kadamba king Śrī Vijaya Śiva Mṛgesa Mahārāja who belonged to the sixth century." Kundakunda according to the *paṭṭ-āvalis* belonged to the first century A.D. from 52 B.C. to A.D. 44. And now comes the crux of the matter, the auther attempting to identify a little known early Pallava ruler as the Śivakumāra Mahārāja who was patron of Śrī Kundākundācārya and was, therefore, also the inspirer of the *kurals* addressed to rulers of men in the *Tirukkural*. I quote the passage from Prof. Chakravarti in full. The Kadamba rulers were not acquainted with the Prakrit language. And the dates are too late for Śrī Kundakunda whose date was definitely the first century A.D. Śrī Kundakunda was born in the Thondamandalam area of the Draviḍians. Perhaps a ruler at Kañchīpuram might supply the answer.

"We have to seek elsewhere for the whereabouts of Śivakumāra Mahārāja, the patron of Śrī Kundakunda.

"Conjeepuram was the capital of the Pallava kingdom. The Pallavas ruled over Thondamandalam and also over a part of the Telugu country up to the river Krishna. Thondamandalam, or Thondainadu was the name given to the area along the east coast between the two Pennars, South Pennar in South Arcot, North Pennar in Nellore and east of the Ghats. This land was divided into several *Nadus* and each *Nadu* into several *Kottams*. It was the land of the learned. Several great Draviḍan scholars were born in it. Throughout the Tamil literature are references to the literary merits and the culture of the inhabitants of Thondainadu. Conjeepuram, the capital of Thondainadu, must have been a great centre of learning in the South. Students from different parts of the country went to Conjeepuram for

purposes of study. Scholars thronged there for the purpose of being recognised by the Pallava court. Mayūra Śarmā, one of the early founders of the Kadamba dynasty, went to the Pallava capital to complete his education in sacred lore. It was there that he quarrelled with the master of the horses who was a Kṣatriya. Mayūra Śarmā, a Brahmin by birth, vowed that even a Brahmin could handle the weapons of war with skill and could found a kingdom. Thus arose the Kadamba dynasty but that was somewhat later in time to Śri Kundakunda. Thus the glory of Congeejpuram, the Pallava capital, must have been wide-spread by the 2nd century A.D. The kings of Conjeepuram as patrons of learning must have encouraged philosophical discussions among the representatives of the different religious sects: the Hindus, the Buddhists and the Jainas. Taking part in such religio-philosophical discussions must necessarily have a reaction on the personal faith of the kings.

In the early centuries of the Christian era, proselytizing was a common factor among the rival religionists. Great religious leaders of different denominations went about the country from place to place converting kings and rulers. It is not improbable that the early Pallava kings at Conjeepuram during the first century A.D. were patrons of or converts to Jaina faith. It is conceivable that a great scholar and leader like Śrī Kundakunda was responsible even for the Jaina faith among the then little known Pallava kings of Conjeepuram.

"The clinching factor might be that according to epigraphical records the Pallava kings had Prakrit as their court language. The important Mayidovolur Grant is in Prakrit, except the last *maṅgala* verse which is in Sanskrit. The inscription follows some forms found in Jaina inscriptions of Mathurā daparting sharply from Pāli and other inscriptions. It is issued by the Pallava king Śivaskanda-varmā of Conjeepuram. The most important point in our view would be the name Śivaskanda-varmā which is only another form of Śivakumāra. Other things apart, to find a name that could be identified as the patron ruler of Śrī Kundakundācārya is the important thing to note here. He figures also as Yuva-mahārāja, another from of Kumāra-mahārāja. It is quite possible, therefore, that this Śivaskanda of Conjeepuram or one of his predecessor with the same name, was the contemporary and disciple of Śrī Kunda-

kunda. This would fit in well with several facts that are available to us about Śrī Kundakunda. Kundakunda otherwise known as Elācārya was born in Thondaimandalam and the *Draviḍa saṅgham* itself was in Thondainadu at Pāṭalipura."

While Prof. A. Chakravarti has tried to place Śrī Kundakunda, the author of the Jaina works in Prakrit, as advisor and perhaps *guru* to the Śivakumāra Mahārāja of Conjeepuram, he has not connected it up with the ruler to whom the author of the *Kural* was addressing his verses, directly addressed to rulers and kings among men. It is quite on the cards speculatively that the Śivakumāra Mahārāja, who is too insignificant to be known to history in his own person, was able to found a dynasty that was later to become most famous in history holding its own against northern and southern enemies and giving birth to a renaissance in all the south Indian arts. It will be satisfactory indeed to trace the greatness of the future Pallavas as patrons of arts and learning to the code of conduct prescribed for their ancestry by a saint of the name of Tiruvalluvar or Kundakunda, identified as the author of the *Kural*. The historical facts may not be extricated clearly but one can speculate boldly about these things, because the *Kural* both by virtue of its high moral tone and by virtue of the conduct it prescribes for rulers among men, has claims to be considered one of the greatest moral works in the world. The chances that the saint was of Jaina persuasion, preceptor to a then minor ruler is all the more to be accepted as more or less proved, for want of any further information.

VIII

Enough has been said in the previous sections to prove that the south Indians had a somewhat long-drawn out traditions of Jaina living and morals. Whether the Jainas travelled to the areas they did like Thondamandalam, Cola, Pāṇḍya, and Cera kingdoms via the Kaliṅga (or Orissa) area or from Bengal and whether they touched the country of the Tamils on their way to Ceylon, cannot be settled satisfactorily now. Suffice it to say that the tradition, placing the first exodus of Jainas from the north into south India at the time of the Candragupta Maurya who himself is said to have come with the Jaina, which was

considered the original source of Jaina activity in south India, may not be wholly correct. Even at the time of Mahāvīra, and probably even before him, the Tamils, as a people, were acquaited with the religion which preached *ahiṁsā* as its major tenet. Long before Āryanization and Hinduism with its ritual Brahminc faiths came down to South, the Tamils were familiar with Jaina morals. Even before Buddhistic monasticism came down to South, Jainism had found firm southern root, it would seem. All these may be only speculated upon, not proved incontrovertibly.

And the *Tirukkural* by Tiruvalluvar became, if we accept the date to be the first century, a great classic in its own right among the Tamils, from the beginning.

CHAPTER II

The General Background to a Study of the Kural

Tamil and Jaina Ambience and Atmosphere

Rudyard Kipling, the imperialist, asked a somewhat rhetorical question of his fellow imperialists, which has a relevance in matters farther afield. He asked "What do they of Britain know, who know only Britain?"

It is necessary to glance at the general background both in Tamilnadu and India with special reference to religions prevailing and about the development of Jaina ideas in general, before we can rightly come to a study of the Jaina content of the *Kural.* But any ancient history of India is riddled with uncertain chronologies, controversial and often controversial points of view that are held with somewhat vicious tenacity, enabling bigots and dogmatists to rule the day. This is true both in religious and literary history, so that even when we acknowledge a work like the *Kural* as a great work, we would seek to deny the obvious implications it spells out in the context of its faith, as enunciated within the text and the faith of the author as circumstantial evidence might prove it. But in the case of Tiruvalluvar's *Tirukkural* the general opinion is more or less divided —it would be wrong to say equally divided for the weight is more on the side of accepting the Jaina faith of the author and the Jaina bias of the work itself. A few might contest this conclusion, but even though they do not go very far and usually end up with the large assumption that the religion of the author, the religious principles which guided him in the composition of the work, do not matter, especially in a secular age—a convenient sophism like ours. It is a matter of historical importance to place the author and the work in the context of the religions

of his times and the practices and principles and *dharma* as understood in his time and age, if we would understand him rightly. Tamils quote the text to offer without understanding the implications. This sometimes vitiates the very purpose of the *Kural* and sometimes leads to laughable results quite incompatible with the high seriousness of purpose and the loftiness of the ideals of the *Kural*. But even a saint or genius like Tiruvalluvar cannot aviod the future misuse of his fondest texts, once he has written them he has committed them to the public domain.

Kural, in spite of being the most loved of the books of the Tamils, has not been placed in the world tradition of poetry and the author does not take his rank as one in the serried ranks of great poets of the world. He ought to do so, but he does not do so mainly because critical homeworks on the author and text have not yet been done, in the sense in which they ought to be done first to inform the Tamils themselves about the literary quality of the work under consideration and later, of lovers of world poetry, a body that does not wait academic recognition so much as critical creative insight and understanding. The *Kural* along with some other similar works in Tamil and other languages in India including Sanskrit have not won recognition in the world as Japanese and Chinese and other oriental literatures have done. Our own critical understanding of our Indian literature has been at fault in this matter and no wonder, while international scholars might sometimes acknowledge the greatness of some Indian work or other to the general reading public, it is not presented as a living literary tradition. This is in spite of the fact that our Sanskritists as well as Tamils speak with inordinate vanity about their own past glories in a sort of sentimental overtones all the way, instead of presenting a critical insight into things of importance.

In considering the general ambience in Tamil and Jaina thinking that was prevalent in the age in which the *Kural* was produced I am relying more on Prof. A. Chakravarti for even though other impartial Tamil scholars like V. Kanagasabai, Tirū Vi Kalyanasundaranar, Vaiyapuri Pillai and others have accepted it as a Jaina work, or at least as adumbrating the Jaina view of life giving expression to a Jaina system of ethical thought, it is Prof. A. Chakravarti who has done more to study,

as far as he can, in the light of the material available to him, the times, the state of Jaina and other religions, the atmosphere obtaining as that time and relating it to the work, the *Kural*, sometimes extending the consideration to the author of the work in so far as it is possible.

I quote the entire first half of Prof. Chakravarti's Introduction to the Kavirāja Pandithar's commentary in Tamil on *Tirukkural*—the Introduction is (conveniently for me) in English. The critical insight might not be all that we of today desire—the Introduction was written half a century ago with regard to facts and ideas. There is, however, little to add to what Prof. Chakravarti has written. Sucht hings as I add by way of comment are put within brackets. My ideas are my own rising out of Chakravarti's statements but I have tried to limit the interpolations to as few as possible and only make them when I think that they were necessary to correct a wrong impression:

Tirukkural is a unique creation of the Tamil genius. (He could have added that it was uniquely a product of Jainism also, but as a Jaina he would have thought that such a statement so early might be considered biassed and not objective.) Its message is universally recognized today as of great importance. (The appreciation is not critical enough to make it a living text of importance to the world in spite of sporadic appreciation from people like Dr. Schweitzer and others. The Tamils have not adopted it except as a work with selfish rhetorical immediate possibilities.) A clear appreciation of the ideas underlying the message of *Tirukkural* must necessarily lead us to understand the cultural background in which it arose.

What was the state of social organization in the Tamil land? What was the exact cultural background? What was the dominant religion in south India?

In order to give a clear answer to these questions, we have to go back to the prehistorical Christian era in the history of south India. For this we have to depend entirely upon the information contained in the Tamil literature. (But even the history of Tamil literature and its high watermarks are as unsettled today as they were a century ago, not to say anything of fifty years ago, when Prof. Chakravarti was writing this.)

Historically, we hear of the kingdoms of south India only

through Aśoka's inscriptions. We have to depend mainly upon the great grammatical work *Tolkappiyam* in order to have a glimpse of the history of the south India. (The *Tolkappiyam* is itself the work of a Jaina, according to the authority of S. Vaiyapuri Pillai and others. There is no certainty about how accurate historical information culled from the *Tolkappiyam* regarding the history and condition, of south India will be, we have no means of knowing because the date of the *Tolkappiyam* is fancifully set back to 5837 B.C. by Dr. A.C. Chettiar, or to the post-*Saṅgam* period in the fifth or sixth century according to Vaiyapuri Pillai. Whether all, or any, of the conclusions we draw will be valid for Tiruvalluvar's time and age, we cannot be wholly certain about.)

That is perhaps the earliest work available to us giving some sort of connected information about social organisation in south India. (True.) Besides the information available in the *Tolkappiyam*, we have to depend on the newly acquired information about the Indus Valley civilization. The discoveries of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa take us back to the pre-Āryan civilization which was prevalent throughout India. (Pre-Āryan, certainly. But was it consistent throughout and was it wholly Draviḍian, it is not certain. It will not be certain till the script is read.) The people who lived in these tracts attained a very high order of civilization and culture as is evidenced by the architectural remains and other important pieces of religion. The people of the Indus Valley civilization must have had a form of religion which must be considered to be of a very high order from the point of view of comparative religions. Expert scholars who made a special study of the inscriptions and the religious symbols, have come to the conclusion that the people of the Indus Valley civilization were Dravḍians who were living in India long before the invasion of the Āryans. (That much might be true but what about the continuity? It is a problem that has not been definitely answered by scholars who are unable to read the script with any degree of conviction.) This conclusion is practically accepted by oriental scholars.

Thus it is clear that the people who lived in the land when the Āryans entered into India through north-western passage were mainly Draviḍians, who had attained a very high stage of culture

and civilization, who were living in fortified cities, unlike the Āryans who were mostly nomads driving their cattle in search of pastures. (What the Jaina scholar does not add because when he was writing the passage it was not quite established that the Jainas have a history as ancient as the Draviḍians, the pre-Āryan people of Mahenjo-daro and Harappa, and that the idea of *munis* which is a concept acceptable to Jainas as something defining a divine way of life is really pre-Āryan, pre-Ṛg-vedic and finds some partial expression in the first of the Vedas, sometimes with respect, and often without reverence, scornfully. The evolution of the religion of Jainism might be studied from the angle of its being wholly of Draviḍian influence and impact influencing the ascetic values after the Vedic age in Hinduism, somewhat confusing the whole issue. Joining your enemies to defeat them is a value that the Āryans were aware of and they did borrow sufficiently from both Draviḍians and Jainas, if they were separate entities, to confuse the whole issue for future scholars in the absence of definite historical landmarks.

The Āryans who fought their way in against the opposition of the land, settled down in the region of the five rivers when they composed their Ṛg-vedic hymns. These hymns represent the earliest compositions available to us. These Vedic hymns contained references to the people of the land who resisted the Āryan invaders vehemently, but had finally to yield to the more powerful invaders and withdraw to the south and east.

We must remember the fact that the reference to the people of the land contained in the Vedic hymns are mainly from the hostile point of view of the invaders. Hence the resisting enemies were described in uncomplimentary terms. Even if they are described in uncomplimentary epithets, still these terms give us enough information about the people of the land. They had their culture and religion entirely different from that of the invading Āryans. The sacrificial lore of the Āryans was not accepted by these early inhabitants of India, (Proving thus perhaps their Jaina existence even at that early time.)

Hence they are referred to as *a-yajñas*, those who do not accept *yajñas*. They are also called *anya-vratas* and *a-vratas* since they do not accept the code of morals followed by the Āryans. Their language was quite different from and unintelligible to the

invaders. They opposed Indra worship which was the foundation of Āryan worship and religion, and hence were called *an-indras*. For their different form of worship they are referred to as *śiśna-devas*; it was the practice of worshipping a nude idol in human form. When we turn to the great epic of Vālmīki, *Rāmāyaṇa*, which represents practically a conflict between the Āryans and Draviḍians, we find it giving an uncomplimentary description of the people of the South from the point of view of the invading Āryans. The Āryan prince Rāma had to wage war with the sovereign of the South, Laṅkā. There we have Rāvaṇa and his tribe described as Rākṣasa, probably representing them to be extremely uncivilized savages. Though the term *Rākṣasa* is intended to connote all those attributes of savage life, still Vālmīki makes Rāvaṇa a great scholar and his capital Laṅkā an abode of culture and art. Thus we have conflicting ideas about Rākṣasas, sometimes described as dangerous savages, sometimes described as highly cultured scholars. (If we read the *Rāmāyaṇa* as a contention for political power instead of as a cultural conflict, the antithesis between savage and noble might be done away with.)

When we turn to the same account (the account of *Rāmāyaṇa*) by the Jainas, we hear a different story altogether. The Jaina account of Rāma's story is available both in Sanskrit and Prakrit, and it is called *Padma-purāṇa* in Sanskrit and *Paumacariu* in Prakrit, Padma being the name of Rāma. According to this account, Rāvaṇa is described as the emperor of the *Vidyādharas*, who had his capital in Laṅkā. The term *vidyādhara* is a descriptive name given to that race because they are specially skilled in applied science. They always travelled in air chariots which they were able to build for themselves. Because of these habits they are referred to as *khe-caras*, those that move in the air. Another branch of these *vidyādharas* lived in the Deccan in the mainland near Kiṣkindhā which was the capital of Vāli and Sugrīva. These are described as monkeys by Vālmīki, whereas they are recognized as another branch of *vidyādharas* by the Jaina writers of the Rāma story. But the point that is interesting to us in this is that the Jaina writers make all these *vidyādharas* to be followers of *ahiṁsā-dharma* and hence *Jina-bhaktas*; because they were the staunch followers of the *ahiṁsā-dharma*, they had to instinctively resist the Āryan invasion whose religious

ideas were mostly centred round *yajñas* as animal sacrifice. Naturally, therefore, they had to resist these foreigners, both for political reason and cultural objections.

Can we safely accept the account of the Jaina writers that prior to the Āryan invasion of the land the dominant religious ideals of ancient India were based upon *ahiṁsā*? Here also we have to depend upon the available Sanskrit literature, Brahmanical as well as Jaina.

According to the Jain account, the *ahiṁsā-dharma* was first revealed to the world by Lord Ṛṣabha, the first of the twenty-four *Tīrthaṅkaras*. Lord Ṛṣabha was the son of Nābhi Mahārāja who was the last of the *Manus*. Up to the birth of Lord Ṛṣabha, the people of the land had practically having every thing for the mere wish, because of the *kalpaka*-trees. They were living in an earthly paradise without knowing the necessity of work or toil. Hence the land was called *bhoga-bhūmi*. Suddenly the whole situation changed. The *kalpaka*-trees disappeared. The people did not know how to obtain their food. They were in a great consternation and anxiety. They all appealed to the lord, Ṛṣabha who was the ruling sovereign of the land at the time. He comforted them. He taught them how to produce food by cultivation of the land. He arranged for the distribution of the food, which occupation had to be carried on by traders. He set apart able-bodied persons for the purposes of defence. Thus he was responsible for the economic organization of the society, (a simple myth about the coming of agriculture, trading and defence arts, thus making what might be called a "modern" society). After ruling over the country for several years, he abdicated his kingdom in favour of his son, Bharata, and went to the forest to perform *tapas* or *yoga*, after casting away all robes and ornaments, characteristics of a sovereign. Thus after years of *tapas*, he obtained omniscience or *kevala-jñāna*. Thereafter, he spent the rest of his life time in preaching the *dharma* to the ordinary people of the land and revealed to them the path of salvation through *tapas* or *yoga*, an ideal which is the exact contradiction of the animal sacrifice which was the central doctrine of the invading Āryans. The story of Ṛṣabha is found in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* and *Vāyu-purāṇa*. There it is recognized that Lord Ṛṣabha was an incarnation of Viṣṇu and that he was the first to reveal the *ahiṁsā-dharma* to the people.

Since this story is commented on both in the Hindu and Jaina *purāṇas,* we have to infer that the Ṛṣabha tradition was accepted by both the parties because of its importance and probably because of its historical foundation. Thus we find that this Ṛṣabha cult of *ahiṁsā* was the prevalent religious idea at the time of the Āryan invasion. Otherwise, we cannot account for the resistance to the invading Āryans by the people of the land who were possessed of evidently, and associated with, a higher form of religious ideas than that of the invading hordes. (How the Jaina ideas of *ahiṁsā*, *yoga* or *tapas*, the ordering of society etc. "corrupted" the Āryan idea of rituals and animal sacrifice and gave rise to other socalled heretical religions, does not form a part of Prof. Chakravarti's story here. He keeps single-mindedly on the course of *ahiṁsā.*)

An unbiassed study of Vedic literature, both the *Saṁhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, would clearly reveal the existence of a higher current of thought based upon *ahiṁsā* and opposed to the cult of Vedic sacrifice. In the Vedic *Saṁhitās* (themselves) we find the existence of conflicting ideas. They not only have the *mantra, svarga-kamo yejet tv-ayam*, he who wants to go to *svarga* let him sacrifice, but also have the *mantra, mā hiṁsayāt*, literally, do not kill on any account, do not give pain. When we come to the Upaniṣadic period of Hindu thought, we clearly see that *ahiṁsā-dharma* becomes a dominant doctrine and the Vedic scrifices are accepted to be of inferior nature, a compromise between the two cultures, as a result of which the *ahiṁsā* cult was recognised to be of greater importance than the other one.

From all these circumstantial evidences, we cannot but accept the conclusion that Ṛṣabha cult of *ahiṁsā* was the prevalent religious ideal throughout India, even before the Āryan invasion. The Āryans, after occupying the land of five rivers, the modern Punjab, must have pushed forward towards the Gangetic valley and occupied the whole of northern India. The original inhabitants being pushed down to the South, beyond the Vindhya hills and towards the easternmost part of the Gangetic valley, the Magadha. Therefore after a long time, the early Draviḍians must have been left undisturbed in south India till another wave rushed towards the South as represented by Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa.* In spite of the Āryan penetration into the South, it is clear that the south Indian culture remained for a long time

based upon the *ahiṁsā-dharma*, characteristic of the Ṛṣabha cult. Probably this state of things continued till the time of Hindu revivalism in the South started by the Śaivite Nayanars and the Vaiṣṇavite Alwars because from their account we find that the ruling sovereigns of the South, e.g. Pāṇḍyas, Colas, Ceras and Pallavas, were followers of the *ahiṁsā* faith till they were converted to Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. (The earliest strata of Tamil literature, the socalled *Saṅgam* literature, including the *Tolkappiyam* and the *Tirukkural*, does show very imperfect Āryanization in thought and instead of being oppressively religious are refreshingly secular in the sense of being most tolerant of various attitudes to the mystery of living.)

Hence we have to maintain that about the first century A.D. (the age of the *Tirukkural*) the dominant culture of the South was the Ṛṣabha cult based on *ahiṁsā*.

When we accept the view that the Ṛṣabha cult was prevalent throughout India even before the advent of the Āryans, we have to accept the conclusion that when the Āryans had occupied the whole of *Hindustan* and the North, the people in south India were left uninterfered with for a long period, till we come to the period of Hindu revivalism. Hence the social organization prevalent in the South must have been one based upon the Ṛṣabha cult of *ahiṁsā*. The view of the orientalists that Jainism was introduced into the South during the time of Candragupta Maurya must be modified. The emperor Candragupta towards the end of his reign abdicated his kingdom in favour of his son and took the ascetic order from his *guru* Bhadrabāhu. As there was a terrible famine in northern India for a period of twelve years, Bhadrabāhu with his *saṅgha* of eight thousand ascetics together with Candragupta in ascetic order migrated to south India. They came up to the Śravaṇabelgola in Karnataka when Bhadrabāhu fell ill. Candragupta stayed with his *guru*, whereas the eight thousand Jaina ascetics who constituted the *saṅgha* went South and stayed in the Pāṇḍya country during the famine in northern India. This migration of the ascetic *saṅgha* was generally considered till recently to be the first introduction to the South of the Jaina faith. Our theory that the Ṛṣabha cult was the dominant faith in the South long before this period will be inconsistent with this view of the orientalists. But the view that Bhadrabāhu's migration was the first time when the Jaina faith

was introduced to the South, must be given up for the following reason.

Bhadrabāhu's *saṅgha* consisted of eight thousand ascetics. These must depend upon householders for their sustenance. Fearing a terrible famine, they migrated to the South. If south India were entirely foreign to them, they would not dare move to the South to escape the famine in the North. Their leader Bhadrabāhu must have been aware of the existence of the prosperous country, mainly consisting of people who followed the *ahiṁsā* faith of lord Ṛṣabha and that he could easily get the support that his *saṅgha* needed from the people. Except with this confidence, it would be impossible to explain the migration of a large body like the Jaina *saṅgha* towards south India.

Otherwise migration towards the South on account of famine in the North and entering into an alien country would have been a foolhardy adventure. It would be merely courting disaster unwisely. Hence we have to maintain that this migration of Bhadrabāhu with his *saṅgha* of ascetics was forced by famine and to seek refuge in the South where the Ṛṣabha cult was prevalent and where hospitality could be expected. The ascetics from the North must have reinforced the activities of the poeple present already therein and contributed to the enriching of the literature and the arts of the people of the South. (Apart from this valid argument, there is the position that since Jaina doctrine had reached Ceylon within a hundred years of Mahāvīra's *nirvāṇa,* it should have gone to the south from Kaliṅga as well as from Bengal regions which were subject to Jaina influence.

By sea or by land, the Jainas should have passed through the Tamil land and settled in it partly in various hospitable regions where they were welcomed. Even if it is not granted that the *ahiṁsā* cult of the Jainas was the most dominant cult in the Tamil regions—though historically considered and by circumstantial evidence, it might have been—it is quite clear that the Tamils were hospitable to the Jaina ideas and were familiar with it from the time of Mahāvīra, if not from even earlier, after Pārśvanātha of the eighth century B.C. They were generally hospitable to it, so that one could, with certainty say that *ahiṁsā* was one of the most dominant cults prevalent for a long time in south India, certainly among the Tamils, where the Āryan ideas and gods were to gain a firm footing only after the first

century A.D. establishing themselves fully only six or seven centuries later. Both literary and other evidences that we can get point to this with a great degree of certainty. Rulers, as well as people, espoused the cause of *ahiṁsā* and hence could claim to be Jainas in essence.)

Following Bhadrabāhu's migration with his Jaina ascetics, there must have been a similar movement from the North of several Buddhist *bhikṣus* during the period of Aśoka's reign. Thus immediately prior to the first century A.D. there must have been a large section of ascetics, both Jaina and Buddhist, who were devoted to the cultural improvement of south India. (All of them including Hindus should have been actively engaged in proselytization in spite of the claim made by Hindus that there is no conversion to Hinduism. This must have given a fillip to the literary activity, which resulted in the composition of important Tamil works belonging to the period, the early Christian era.)

Of these literary productions, the *Kural* forms the most important one which is of the first century A.D. Thus the Ṛṣabha cult already prevalent in south India, freshly reinforced by Bhadrabāhu's immigration must have resulted in emphasizing the importance of the social organization contemplated in the Ṛṣabha cult. From the very beginning, the Ṛṣabha cult divided society into two main groups, the householder and the ascetic. According to the Jaina tradition, this division of society is as old as lord Ṛṣabha, the propounder of the *ahiṁsā* cult. It was he who taught the people to depend on agriculture for their sustenance. Agricultural products must be distributed among a whole society by traders. The able-bodied men of the society should defend society. Thus all these functionaries differently comprised the householder section of society. The ascetic is expected not to have anything by way of property. He must completely renounce all his belongings. He is not expected to have anything of his own. Divested of all ties, domestic and economic, he is expected to devote all his energy for the cultural improvement of society in general. No doubt he is expected to devote his time to spiritual development and self-realization. But this is not the main ideal of Jain ascetic. He is expected to follow the footsteps of several Tīrthaṅkaras. The main function of a Tīrthaṅkara is to devote his time to *dharma-prabhāvanā*, or

preaching the spiritual truth to the public at large. This, considered to be the main duty of the propounder of Jainism and every ascetic, is expected to follow the footsteps of the Tīrthaṅkara. So much so that the ascetics must have devoted their time to the improvement of literature and art. They must have been engaged in important literary activities with the object of elevating the masses. The ordinary householders in their turn were expected to support the ascetic order by offering them food. Thus the society was divided into two clearcut sections as the householder and the ascetic, the former devoted to agriculture and trade, the production of food and wealth, and the latter devoted to general spiritual improvement of the whole society, and depending upon the householder for his sustenance for the service rendered to the society as regards cultural foundation. (How completely the author of the *Kural* in his work subscribes to this social organization enunciated by the founder of the *ahiṁsā* cult is quite obvious to any one who reads the text carefully. At various points, this basic social organization is considered the *dharma* of the people, and of the rulers as far as the *Kural* sets itself to address them.)

This clearcut division of society into two groups must have been accepted by the Buddhists who migrated to the South, because Gautama Buddha also organized a similar society. The Ṛṣabha cult of *ahiṁsā* which was prevalent in south India from ancient days, is always associated with the code of moral action and thought peculiar to each section of the soceity, one for the householder and the other for the ascetic. No doubt the Jaina code is based on *ahiṁsā*. *Ahiṁsā* is the foundation of the moral life of both ascetic as well as the householder. Both are expected to observe the five vows according to the Ṛṣabha cult—*ahiṁsā*, *satya*, *asteya*, *brahmacarya* and *aparigraha*.

However, the code of ethics intended for the householder accepts limited observation of the five vows, whereas the ascetic is expected to observe all the five vows without any limitation. Hence the householder has to observe what is called *aṇu-vrata*, whereas the ascetic is to observe the *mahā-vrata*, thus the code of morals is also of two different sorts, *dharma* for the householder and *dharma* for the ascetic, which in Tamil go by the name *illaraw* and *turavaram* respectively. In this social organization where a large section consisted of ascetics who had to depend

for their sustenance on the other section who were producers of foodstuff. Hence the tiller of the soil is the foundation of the social organization. (Others follow him, says the *Kural.*)

Without the tiller of the soil, nothing could thrive. Hence the emphasis was laid upon agriculture and all the rest of the society had to depend upon this main productive occupation.

We find an indirect corroboration of this view from the account given in the *Tolkappiyam*. About the time of the composition of the *Tolkappiyam*, Āryans penetrated to the South with their own social organization which was based upon *Varṇ-āśrama-dharma* and those who belonged to the Āryan fold were evidently practising their own form of faith based upon Vedic sacrifice. But their influence was very limited and meagre. (It could be asked by those not charitable to the Āryan organization, who a Brahmin is, and get away with answering it in non-Āryan ways, belittling the Āryan Brahmin by birth as does the *Kural*. The dominant social group as depicted by *Tolkappiyam* was the class of landed aristocrats. These landed aristocrats or Vellalas constituted the most important section of the society. Among themselves they did not recognize any caste distinctions. They had the privilege of assuming all the functions characteristic of the four *varṇas* according to the social organiaztion of the Āryans. They had the privilege of entering into matrimonial alliances with the ruling families in the South. Since their main occupation was agriculture they had to keep themselves aloof from the social organisation imported from the North through they Āryan penetration. According to the Āryan conception of the social organization, agriculture was considered to be the fit occupation of the last class, the Śūdras, an occupation which was beneath the dignity of the other three upper classes. The *Dharma-śāstras* of the Āryans clearly maintain that it was *infra dig* to the upper class to engage in agriculture which was considered to be the meanest occupation (quite in contrast evidently to Tiruvalluvar's idea of it as the noblest profession). The Vellalas in the South proudly maintained that agriculture was the noblest profession and all the rest of society had to depend for their maintenance only upon the agriculturists. Thus we find in the very earliest days of the pre-Christian era, the social organization in the South was quite different from the social organization according to the Āryan *Dharma-śāstras*. The

Ṛṣabha cult was thus opposed not only to the Vedic religion based on sacrifice but also to the ideal of the social organization based upon *Varṇ-āśrama-dharma*, one maintaining that agriculture was the meanest profession and the other maintaining that agriculture was the noblest profession for a man.

We have mentioned that the Āryans penetrated towards the South with their cultural and social organization even during the pre-Christian era. Besides the dominant Ṛṣabha cult of *ahiṁsā*, there was the Āryan cult of Vedic sacrifices also practised by the newcomers.

Besides these two groups of a religious kind, there was also present the religion of Gautama Buddha which was brought from the North. Though Gautama Buddha founded his religion on the same principle of *ahiṁsā*, still his religion in actual practice took an entirely different form from that of Ṛṣabha's cult of *ahiṁsā*. Philosophically Buddha did not consider the doctrine of *ātman* as of great importance. In fact his religion is called *an-ātma-vāda*, the soul-denying religion. In this respect it differed entirely both from Ṛṣabha's cult and the Upaniṣadic cult, because both the cults emphasized the importance of *ātman*, the self, and the ideal of self-realization or *mokṣa*. Curiously though Gautama Buddha spoke of salvation or self-realization or *nirvāṇa* he did not consider it necessary to emphasise the importance of self or *ātman* in order to reach the *nirvāṇa* or salvation.

Besides these philosophical differences, there was also the fundamental and practical difference between Buddhism and Jainism which we have been referring to as the Ṛṣabha cult. The latter constantly maintains that belief in *ahiṁsā* must necessarily lead to the rejection of meat-eating as a corollary.

Curiously the Buddhist preachers who came after Gautama Buddha conveniently introduced a compromise, They said that Buddhists must not kill any animal but it is not necessary that you should be rejecting meat as food because "You can purchase it from the butcher." (A Tamil proverb says, "The sin of killing is absolved by the eating of the meat".) This convenient compromise was practised by the Buddhists who had migrated into and settled down in the South, a practice which followers of Jainism vehemently criticised. (Even author of the *Kural* has a dig at the Buddhists saying that "So long as men eat meat there

will be found killers of animals.") Thus we see that these three religious movements were prevalent at the time or age to which the *Kural* belongs. (Unlike the Jainas, the Buddhists did not assiduously cultivate the non-ascetic laymen, it should be remarked here. This might also be one of the reasons why Buddhism, an essentially ascetic religion, dissappeared from the country of its origin, without a sufficient body of laymen to sustain it.) Jainism was the dominant faith because it was the faith of the landed aristocrats as well as some of the rulers of of the land.

The picture of the social and religious background that Professor Chakravarti draws, is from the early layers of Tamil literature and the *Kural* is one of such early Tamil works. It, to a great extent, confirms the thoughts about social, religious and cultural background as detailed by Prof. Chakravarti. The *Kural* can be considered the product of its age preferring the social and moral code of the Jainas, the cult of *ahiṁsā* and striking an effective blow in its own favour on its own terms. Though universal in appeal, the work that has come down to us as the *Kural* by Tiruvalluvar is the product of its times and has for its background Jaina ethical practice, seeking to bring to the notice of its readers the universality of the moral code and its practicability under the conditions prevailing in the world of the author.

Much more might be said of the background, especially in view of the maxims of the author directed at rulers and kings of men and also in view of the treatment of love in a most conventional way. On both these heads, I shall say the pertinent things when I deal with these themes in turn in later chapters.

From a study of the attitudes of the Buddhists of those days it emerges that they were not careful about nurturing the attitude of householders and laymen for the sustenance and upkeep of the ascetic order which naturally they, as well as the Jainas, considered important. The Jainas, then as now, were interested in the laymen who professed to follow them, and that might be one of the logical reasons why an *ācārya* of such eminence, hailed as an original thinker who contributed to Jaina thought, though fit to write a book wholly addressed to laymen who might be interested in Jaina ways of life. That he wrote it in the Tamil language, the language which few of

his times in his region could read and profit literate readers by, is understandable also.

And in all fairness to the subject, it should be said that there are authorities who have studied the matter, who place Kunda-kunda Ācārya himself in the fourth century A.D. Most of what Prof. Chakravarti said about the social background and the moral code as practised by the Jainas in the land of the Tamils, need not be changed for the advance in four centuries. Those were not days of rapid change and the Āryanization of the South, for various reasons, was slow in creeping upon the land and the people; in religion it took the form of devotion and was fully evolved by about the eighth century. The Jaina influence itself extended up to the tenth century, if not even later, the Jainas having developed a tolerance and a habit of living in hostile societies and partly because, also, they were emphatically the food producers as the wealth producers of the land and of the people.

CHAPTER III

The Auspicious Invocations of the Jainas

In considering the *Kural* as a work of literature by a Jaina, directed at the lay householder who had to provide the sustenance for the ascetic orders as well as maintain the moral codes in addition to producing wealth and food stuffs, we can expect that the invocations in the book will follow the Jaina principles, and not any other recognizable religious principles or ideas.

As regards this matter in reference to the invocatory verses and chapters in the *Kural*, I cannot do better than again quote the relevant passages from Introduction of Prof. Chakravarti to the Tamil editon of Kavirāja Pandithar's commentary on the *Kural* in Tamil. Prof. A. Chakravarti is deriving the information from the Tamil, and of course Jaina, commentator, and adding such material as would carry conviction about his argument.

According to the Jaina tradition Kundakunda or Elācārya is the author of the *Kural.*

In a separate Prakrit work, Ācārya Kundakunda speaks of four auspicious objects in the world, called, *cattāri mamgalam: arahamtā mamgalam, siddhā mamgalam, sāhū mamgalam* and *kevali-pannatto dhammo mamgalam.* The four auspicious objects are: *Arhats*, the purifiers; *Siddhas*, the purifiers; *Sādhus*, the purifiers; and the *Dharma* revealed by the *Kevalin* or Omniscient, the purifier.

Thus the four auspicious purifying agents are worthy of adoration first, because they are the four noblest objects in the world, *cattāri loguttamā: arahamtā loguttamā; siddhā laguttamā; sāhū loguttamā*, and *kevali-pannatto dhammo loguttamā.* The four objects are: *Arhats*, the noblest; *Siddhas*, the noblest; *Sādhus*, the noblest, and the *Dharma* revealed by the *Kevalin*, the noblest.

Since these four are the noblest things in the world, man

ought to seek refuge in these four. Hence he says, *cattāri saraṇaṁ pavvajjāmi: arahaṁte saraṇaṁ pavvajjāmi, siddhe saraṇaṁ pavvajjāmi, sāhū saraṇaṁ pavvajjāmi, kevali-paṇṇattaṁ dhaṁmaṁ saraṇaṁ pavvajjāmi.* I seek refuge in these four: I seek refuge in the *Arhats*; I seek refuge in the *Sidhas*; I seek refuge in the *Sādhus*; I seek refuge in the *Dharma* revealed by the *Kevalin*, the Omniscient.

In all these four parts of the prayer prescribed by Śrī Kundakunda, emphasis is laid on the *Arhats*, the *Siddhas*, the *Sādhus* and the *Dharma*.

The term *Arhat* is used to denote the Lord Omniscient, who is otherwise known as Tīrthaṅkara, responsible for revealing the *ahiṁsā-dharma* for the benefit of human beings who because of ignorance are entangled in the world, *saṁsāra*, indulging in sensual pleasures.

Jaina tradition speaks of infinite sets, each with twentyfour such Tīrthaṅkaras. Of the present set the first was Lord Ṛṣabha and the last Lord Mahāvīra Vardhamāna, an elder contemporary of Gautama Buddha.

Each one of these Tīrthaṅkaras, after obtaining omniscience, spends the rest of his life in *dharma-prabhāvanā* or preaching *dharma* to the people at large. The real holy life of the Tīrthaṅkara or *Arhat* begins after attaining the omniscience, technically called *Kevala-jñāna*. He goes about from place to place preaching *dharma* for the benefit of mankind. Hence the *Arhat* is the noblest to be worshipped according to Jaina tradition, because he is the path-revealer. He leads mankind which is entangled in *saṁsāra*, towards the path of salvation. Hence among the four objects of worship, *Arhat* is placed first, because he is directly responsible for the *dharma*. The *dharma* preached by *Arhat* or *Jina*, is the *ahiṁsā* doctrine which enjoins universal love, extending far beyond the circumference of humanity and comprising all living beings. This *dharma* or universal love being the basis of Jainism, is revealed by the Tīrthaṅkaras, the last of whom was a historical personage of the 6th century B.C.

The term *Siddha* refers to the last stage of a Tīrthaṅkara when he attains *nirvāṇa*, and assumes the nature of the perfect self, the *paramātma-svarūpa*. This *Siddha*-hood refers to the pure spiritual existence after the absolute destruction of the *karmans* and the dissociation from the body which is still present in the

Arhat stage. The perfect and the pure spiritual self is known as the *Siddha* in the Jaina terminology. This is the highest spiritual entity serving as the goal for a human being and which may be compared to *Paramātman* or *Para-brahman* contemplated by the Vedāntins. This is the second object of worship, and the prayer refers to as the second item, though spiritually, it is the highest.

After mentioning the *Arhat* and the *Siddha*, you have reference to all the *Sādhus*, those who attained spiritual self-realisation through *tapas* or *yoga*. These are all worthy of adoration according to Śrī Kundakunda.

After referring to these three groups of personalities, he refers to the *dharma* revealed by *Kevalin* or the omniscient Tīrthaṅkara. The *Dharma* revealed by a *Kevalin* stretches out the path that ought to be followed by man in his attempt to realise his ultimate spiritual nature. Therefore that is also one of the four purifying agents of the *maṅgala-mantra.*

These four are spoken of as the *cattāri maṁgalam*, the four blissful purifying ideals. They are spoken of as the *chattāri loguttamā*, the four noblest objects in the world. The prayer concludes by saying *cattāri saraṇaṁ pavvajjāmi*, I take refuge in these four to realise my hope.

It is obvious that the language used in this prayer is Prakrit and Śrī Kundakunda used Prakrit and Tamil to communicate his massage to the world. He composed a number of Jaina works in the Prakrit language, the three most important being the *Pañcāsti-kāya*, the *Pravacana-sāra* and the *Samaya-sāra*. The first means the five constituent elements of the cosmos. The second means the essence of the divine revelation. The third means nature of the Self or *paramātma-svarūpa*. The only Tamil work that is associated with Śrī Kundakunda is the *Tirukkural*. Here we have practically, in essence, in Tamil, the message already communicated through his Prakrit works. (Though Prof. Chakravarti says that the message of the *Kural* is the same as of the known Prakrit works of Śrī Kundakunda, it has to be confessed that the message of the *Kural* is more universal and confined to the ideal of great and moral living, instead of enquiring into the nature of things, or philosophical and metaphysical enquiries, or speculations about the nature of Reality. Truth in *Kural* is a humanistic, wholly human, and not the ultimate, reality of spiritual enquiry or philosophical attempts at knowing things. The poet of the

Kural was interested in the *saṁsāra* instead of enquiring how to get rid of it; though he tells you how to do that also. He was interested to find out, and communicate, how to live well. His enquiry might not have been against the *dharma* of the Jainas but his purpose was limited, almost as if he confessed that he left his philosophical, religious, metaphysical and other enquiries to the confines of his Prakrit works and confined himself, wittingly and consciously, to the limited and narrow, but universal, purpose of the morally beautiful and good life according to a *dharma* which he understood. This difference between the purpose of the *Kural* and other, especially Prakrit, works of Śrī Kundakunda of specifically Jaina nature, has to be borne in mind throughout these discussions.)

Prof. A. Chakravarti writes further: The plan adopted in the introduction of the *Tirukkural* exactly corresponds to the quatrains mentioned above which is given in the prayer of the Jainas by Śrī Kundakunda. The first ten verses of the *Kural* which are in praise of god, contain the adoration of both the *Arhats* and the *Siddhas*. The third chapter of ten verses deals with 'in praise of ascetics' that is the *Sādhus* in the third aspect. The fourth chapter of ten verses deals with righteousness, that is the law of *dharma*. All the four aspects of the *cattāri maṁglaṁ* as prescribed by Śrī Kundakunda are to be found in the thirty verses, or *kurals*, which occur in chapter one, three, and four of the *Kural*.

There, is a chapter, second in number, of ten *kurals* in praise of rain which is, otherwise not explainable either as belonging to the Jaina canon or to other canons or codes. But one feels constrained to believe that the author of the *Kural* placed the second chapter of ten verses in the *Kural* as second in importance to the *Arhats* and *Siddhas* and their praise, for he was dealing mainly with the lay Jaina householder, the farmer and tiller of the soil for whom rain was most important. The Tamil tradition gives a clue as to how the Tamils of ancient days looked upon rain. The *Puranauru* stanza says, "You say *Pāri* and *Pāri* as giver, but more great than *Pāri* is the rain which gives and always gives." No wonder a contemporary of Tiruvalluver, the author of the poem, referred to rain as the most generous giver in a world of gifts. This is what Tiruvalluvar expatiates on in the chapter on rain. (And to go to a com-

paratively later work, the *Silappadhikaram* which later research dates as belonging to the tenth century, or even later, though scholars of Chakravarti's days believed it to be of the second century, refers to natural phenomenon like the sun, moon and its invocation. It has in fact no other invocation.)

We shall consider the Jaina content of chapters one, three and four of the *Kural* in the next chapter. In the meanwhile let us see what Prof. Chakravarti has to say about the interloper in chapter two on rain.

Prof. Chakravarti writes: Section or chapter 2 which speaks of rain ought to come after these three chapters and probably it was so when the work was first composed. The present arrangement might be due to later commentators and we need not associate the arrangement with the author. But anyhow all the four constitute the introductory chapters of the *Tirukkural*, three sections or chapters being practically the enlargement and paraphrase of *cattāri maṁglaṁ*, *cattāri loguttamā* and *cattāri saraṇaṁ pavvajjāmi*.

The chapter on the importance of rain is a necessary preamble to the work which considers agriculture as the basis of social organisation. Even now agriculture in south India is mainly dependant on annual rainfall. Without sufficient rainfall at proper times agricultural operations will completely fail. Want of rain as well as excessive rain causing floods will be both ruinous to agriculture. A similar condition must have been prevalent 2000 years ago; hence the author emphasizes the necessity of rain for agricultural operations as well as the destructive condition of lack of rain, or excessive rain. He indicates, in short, how the social and religious functions will all come to a standstill if agriculture fails, and agriculture will fail only because of adverse conditions of rainfall. Hence he points out that neither the householder nor the ascetic can function satisfactorily without the help of profuse rainfall. The householder is expected to observe the four kinds of gifts or *dāna*: offering food to the needy, offering medicine to the sick, offering protection to those who are in grief and fear, and lastly, promoting culture; *anna-dāna*, *auṣadhi-dāna*, *abhaya-dāna* and *śāstra-dāna*.

The holy saints who are expected to live their lives in *tapas* in solitude will have to be maintained by the householder by offering them food, whenever they are hungry and enter a town or village

for obtaining *bhikṣā*. Thus the sustenance of the ascetic is also indirectly dependant on the rainfall. Thus, apart from serving as the basis for the householder and the ascetic successfully performing their respective duties, rainfall is also the basis of state finance and general prosperity of the country. State finance must mainly depend on land revenue. Land revenue must, in its turn, depend on seasonal rainfall, because failure of harvest must necessarily involve loss of revenue to the state, hence the individual prosperity as well as the prosperity of the state also depend upon rain. It need not be emphasized that general domestic happiness of married life is dependant upon general prosperity and wealth, both individual and social. Whenever there is failure of rainfall and the consequent failure of harvest, there is bound to be famine in the land, affecting the general happiness of the people, thus interfering with domestic happiness.

Thus the author has evidently in mind the basic foundation of rainfall for the succesful performance of the duties of the householder as well as the ascetics and for the successful functioning of the state in maintaing the resources of revenues and general domestic happiness. Thus the chapter on rainfall might be taken to be a preamble to the whole book which deals with virtue, wealth and happiness.

I give below the ten stanzas, or *kurals*, about rainfall, being chapter 2 of the *Kural*, so that we can understand the whole significance of Prof. Chakravarti's argument about the social background of agricultural activity being the support and mainstay of ascetic and householder activity as well as the prosperity of the State.

In Praise of Rain

1. The earth sustains itself on the rain from the sky; rain is life-giving nectar.
2. Rain produces the food we eat; rain is the food of that food.
3. Hunger would stalk the earth, if rains fail.
4. If the rain clouds fail him, the tiller cannot till the fields for sowing.
5. Rain can ruin, and raise from ruin, the world.
6. If rain cease to fall, even grass cannot grow on earth.

7. Even the riches of the seas will dwindle to nothing if the rains do not give back to the seas their water.
8. If the rains fail, neither the annual festivals nor daily worship of the gods will take place.
9. If the rains fail, there will be neither munificence nor penance among men.
10. The world cannot survive without rain; there can be no limitless supply of food without rain.

In somewhat simplistic, but doomfilled words, the author of the *Kural* surveys the disasters that might affect the major food supply of the region he lived in. His view is gloomy but consistent with his insistence that agriculture, tilling the soil, is the noblest profession man can indulge in. The loss of food supplies will affect ascetic and householder alike and the kingdom as well.

The first chapter of the *Kural* consisting of ten *kurals* which form the invocatory chapter, is one of the crucial chapters of the work from which scholars like Kanagasabai, Tiruvi Ka and Vaiyapuri Pillai concluded that the author of the *Kural* was a practising Jaina, the work itself in an exposition of the Jaina moral code as expected by the lay Jainas practising the *aṇu-vratas* preparatory to the observance of the *mahā-vratas*. The title of the chapter, as found in all the texts, is In Praise of God but it need not be the title given by the poet; there is no indication that the author gave the title except that it is there. There is no reason either to believe that he did not name it so, praise of god being the common usual practice of every writer though, as Prof. Chakravarti points out, this first chapter of the *Kural* combines in itself the *saraṇam* idea of the Jainas, setting forth the homage to the Tīrthaṅkaras or *Arhats* and the *Siddhas*.

II

Let us take a view of the first chapter in a translation (my own) without any frills, straightforward, trying to get the words of the poet directly, without help of commentators of Hindu, or of any other, persuasion.

In Praise of God

1. All alphabets begin with the letter *A*; this world begins with him who is the first (*Ādi Bhagavān*).
2. Of what use is learning if it lead not to the feet of Him who is Supreme Wisdom.
3. Those who seek the feet of Him who walks on flowers, will live long.
4. Those who have reached the feet of Him who has no desires, no evil will befall him.
5. The dark dichotomy of good and evil dog not those who praise Him constantly.
6. He who follows the way of Him who has conquered the five senses, will live long.
7. The only way to get rid of the worries of the mind is to seek the feet of Him who has no rival.
8. The only way to swin the seas of hazards, that is life, is to find refuge at the feet of the Righteous One.
9. The head that bows not at the feet of Him that has the eight qualities, will not have any quality.
10. Only His feet can serve as boat if you would cross the sea, that is life.

Reading this in a neutral, bereft of religious nuances, language like English, the comment might well be that it is as near a Jaina concept as anything else.

A few of the terms used by the poet in delineating the qualities of God or in describing Him, are identifiable as exclusively Jaina terms and have been so identified by scholars and laymen as well. *Ādi Bhagavān* is one such word; "He who walked over flowers" is another; "He with eight qualities" is another; and the words for "He of supreme knowledge" *Vālarivan* again are words of exclusive Jaina usage. The *Kural* is perhaps the oldest Jaina text in a non-religious context except for *Tolkappiyam* which preceded it, but almost all later Jaina secular literature, epics as well as moralistic writers, and others, use these terms and some of them have found their way as most exclusive Jaina terms in vocabulary lists made both by Jaina scholars and Hindu scholars, so that on the evidence of this first chapter of the *Kural*, In Praise of God, it should be taken

for granted that it is proved incontrovertibly that the poet of the *Kural* was a Jaina, of Jaina religious persuasion.

In this connection Prof. A. Chakravarti quotes the authority of F.W. Ellis in his edition of the Tiruvalluvar in Tamil with English translation and commentary. It gives the relevant details:

That being's precious aid, the term here used as a name of the deity *Anthaṅan*, is derived from *am*, beauty, and *thanmai*, literally coolness, freshness, figuratively kindness, mercy; and the compound means, therefore, beautifully merciful. The word is not found in the dictionaries among the names of the Supreme Being but as a title of Brahmins and Arugen, Arugen being a wholly Jaina term for the Tīrthaṅkaras and the *Siddhas*. In reference to the latter Parimel Azagar (a commentator of the *Kural*) says, *aravazhi* is translated as *dharma-cakra*, and it is posited as in the hands of the *Anthanan* or Brahmin, there are some who explain the term *aravazhi* as referring to that *Anthanan* who possesses the circle of virtues. *Āzhi* signifies a circle as well as a sea and the *aravazhi anthanan*, though assigned by R.C.J. Beschi in his *Sadur Agarathi* to the supreme being, is in all other dictionaries given to Arugen. The Jainas refer, under this interpretation, to this distich for the further proof of Tiruvalluvar having belonged to their sect.

Ellis continues with regard to the praise of Him with the eight qualities (*kural* No. 9). "Of the eight attributes here mentioned, four are positive and four negative. The positive attributes to each of which the epithet which preceds the eight" endless, infinite "must be added, considered as common, are infinite wisdom, infinite intelligence, infinite power, infinite happiness. The negative attributes are, being without a name, secondly, being without a tribe, thirdly, being without senility, and fourthly, without impediment. The eight qualities are mentioned as special Jaina attributes in later Jaina texts and dictionaries.

The beings, subject to defined defects, are men and other creatures, entangled in the bonds of matter and liable to mortal births. The being who is not only free from these defects, but has attained also the contrary, that is, who has released himself from the bonds of matter and is no longer subject to mortal births, is God, the Supreme Being. Imperfection may be compared to darkness and perfection to light; darkness, it is true, is only the absence of light, but in order of existence it proceeds;

for light accedes to darkness, not darkness to light; where darkness is and has ever been, light may come; imperfection, therefore, like matter of which it is the attribute, is without beginning, eternal *ex parteante*. But, though defect is thus originally inherent in nature, it is not permanent and all beings consequently may free themselves from it. Perfection is not inherent but attainable; it is the ultimate end of nature, to which all our operations tend. When therefore, a being has divested himself of inherent defects, he necessarily attains perfection. (He becomes God.)

The Jaina commentator of *Tirukkural*, Kavirāja Pandithar identifies *Ādi Bhagavān* of the first *kural* as Lord Ṛṣabha; *Bhagavān* being the one who is free of material defects and full of supreme knowledge and *Ādi* being first, so inferentially Lord Ṛṣabha who was the first of the twentyfour Tīrthaṅkaras of the Jainas.

Later Tamil Jaina texts like the *Mahā-purāṇam*, *Śrī-purāṇam* and others explicate the whole of the phrase from the Jaina point of view. The Brahmin work *Kayataram* lists *Ādi Bhagavān* as the name of the first of the Tīrthaṅkaras in the Jaina tradition. Many other *nighaṇṭus*, lists of vocabularies, both of Jaina and non-Jaina origin, point to the term *Ādi Bhagavān* as from the Jaina tradition. No other tradition has the word, till the story of Valluvar being born of *Ādi* and *Bhagavān*, two mortal male and female, was invented.

In the second *kural*, the term *Vālarivan* is interpreted as he of pure knowledge, the *Kevalin*, that is the omniscient. It is a tradition among Jainas to talk of the supreme knower as *Arhat*, God, Tīrthaṅkara. Right knowledge is one of the cornerstones of Jaina thinking.

The third *kural* has a phrase about God as He who walked on flowers*. The reference here is to Jaina tradition, the refe-

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* *nabhas-talaṁ pallavayann-iva tvaṁ*
sahasra-patr-āmbuja-garbha-cāraiḥ/
pād-āmbujaiḥ pātita-māra-darpo
bhūmau prajānāṁ vijahāra bhūtyai//
Samanta-bhadra, *Svayam-bhū-stotra*,-verse 29.
un-nidra-hema nava-paṅkaja-puñja-kāntī
paryul-lasan-nakha-mayūkha-śikh-ābhirāmau/
pādau padāni tava yatra Jinendra dhattaḥ
padmāni tatra vibudhāḥ parikalpayanti//
Māna-tuṅga, *Bhakt-āmara-stotra*, verse 36.

rence here is to the *Arhat* as having walked over the lotus flowers placed for him by the gods, a story which is referred to in the later epic *Silappadikāram* and other Jaina works. The Jaina commentator of the *Kural* quotes as many as ten authorities for this story of Him who "walked on flowers".

The fifth *kural* talks of two *karmans*, a Jaina terminology, usually recognized as part of Jaina thinking, obscuring the natural qualities and the acquired qualities of the soul.

In *kural* six, the poet talks of him "who has conquered the five senses" evidently implying the Tīrthaṅkara who having been man, could control his five senses and rise to Godhood unlike Hindu and other Gods who are born Gods. The act of conquering the five senses and being bereft of false ideas or conduct seems to imply the *ahiṁsā* doctrine and *dharma* posed by the Tīrthaṅkara more than anything else in the Hindu or other religious practices of the time. Godhead was attainable by conquering the senses and following the truth, bereft of falseness, and by walking the right path.

In the seventh *kural* there is a word which seems to be a direct translation of Śrī Kundakunda's reference in his Prakrit work, *Samaya-sāra*, describing God as one without compare; *aṇovamaṁ** is the word he uses.

The *aravazhi anthanan* has been already discussed in the words of Ellis earlier. The word combination seems to have been peculiar to the Jainas, though the Buddhist doctrines too are associated with the *dharma-cakra*, that is the wheel of law or righteousness. The references from later Tamil literature to the phrase can be drawn from all over Jaina literature and sometimes from non-Jaina sources too like Villiputharar when treating of the wheel in the hand of Maha-viṣṇu. But the *Anthanan* Brahmin, in this context seems to suggest not godhood by birth but achieved by *tapas* or *yoga* or deeds. Later in *Kural* we come across attempts to define what is, or what makes a Brahmin, an *anthanan*.

The eight qualities are a direct translation of the Sanskrit phrase *aṣṭa-guṇa-saṁyukta*. The Jainas rightly claim the phrase,

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* *vandittu savva-siddhe dhuvam-acalam-aṇovamaṁ gadiṁ patte|*
vocchāmi samaya-pāhuḍam-iṇamo suya-kevalī-bhaṇiyaṁ||
Kundakunda, *Samaya-sāra-prābhṛta*, verse 1.

though following the Jainas other sects too talked of the God without qualities or full of the eight qualities in turn.

The tenth verse posits the idea of salvation as becoming free of the cycle of births and deaths, crossidg the sea of *saṁsāra*—a common idea in all Hinduism, borrowed from its origins in Jainism.

In this context it has to be emphasized that the idea of *saraṇa*, feet, is most expressive. There has been no expert studies on this matter but both the Jainas and the Buddhists were the religious sects which first perfected the idea of feet as sacred in their iconology and image making. How this came about is worth study. It might have come about because unlike the Hindu protagonists of their time, they had no fixed abodes but were peripatetic saints and sages wandering over the land converting those who would come over to their fold. All the Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras were great walkers of the Indian earth. No doubt, feet became a part of the imagery associated with them. This aspect of Jainism and Buddhism will bear further research and study. The very fact that the poet of the *Kural* in seven out of the ten *kurals* refers to the Feet of Him, might be considered intriguing in itself.

The first decad of the *kurals* making up the introduction to the *Kural* and in the nature of an invocation, seems to clearly indicate that the poet of the *Kural* was a Jaina and was saying as much in vocabulary as in ideas, that his was only the Jaina idea of God-head. When we force the verses to take on other religious connotation or appearances, we have to define the meaning in farfetched way and no familiar conventions.

I have seen a pamphlet which roundly says that the God of Tiruvaḷḷuvar was a Christian God, particularly Jesus Christ, to whom the *dharma-cakra* is given, to whom are said to belong the eight qualities, who walked on flowers etc. etc. It could be so interpreted, but only by a little bending of truth while the Jaina interpretation of God as the Tīrthaṅkara and the *Siddha* can come with the least difficulty directly almost on the face of it.

III

If further proof were needed of the Jaina character of the work as the *Kural*, it can be provided by a consideration of the

third chapter of ten verses which speak in praise of renouncers. A mere reading of the verses, as follow, will seem to indicate only the Jaina renouncers, though it might be stretched certainly to all other kinds of ascetics and renouncers.

In Praise of Renouncers

1. All the scriptures say that those who renounce the world, duly after their duties are done, are best among men.
2. Can we count the number of the dead among men? It is equally difficult to count the benefits of renunciation.
3. Those who have taken to the ascetic way of life after weighing the consequences of living in the world, they are bright with fame.
4. He who controls his five senses with ascetic firmness, is like the rich seed in fertile soil.
5. The lord of heaven, *Indra*, himself, will bear witness to might of those who have conquered their five senses.
6. The great achieve great things; the little ones fail far short of achievement.
7. He who knows the real nature of the five senses, taste, sight, feel, smell, sound, knows the world.
8. The wisdom of the ascetics is the scripture of the world.[1]
9. The wrath of those who stand on the Hill of Righteousness as ascetics, cannot be side-stepped.
10. Ascetics can be called the real Brahmins of the world as they are gracious towards all.

Apart from the fact already pointed out that, after talking in praise of the first two of the *cattāri maṁgala*, this chapter talks of the third of the four auspicious things, that of the renouncers or *Sādhus*, it makes specific attempts to proclaim in breif the Jaina more than any other facets of asceticims. It includes a definition of Brahminism which departs boldly from the definitions of Brahminhood by birth as accepted by the Hindus in general and the Vedic conventionalists who extol sacri-

1. *āgama-cakkhū sahū iṁdiya-cakkhūṇi savva-bhūdāṇi /*
devā ya ohi-cakkhū siddhā puṇa savvado cakkhū //
Kundakunda, *Pravacana-sāra*, verse 234.

fices and rituals. It does not define the duties or conduct of the renouncers except their overall control of the five senses; it talks merely of their glories accepting that the renunciation and the status of the renouncers in a world which, for its spirituality, depends on them. And only in a totally Jaina sense are the scriptures of the world "the wisdom of the ascetics"; other disciplines can include other wisdom, but Jaina wisdom in principle and basically consists of the wisdom of renouncers and ascetics who have conquered the five senses.

The very first verse which does not come through in the translation, hints at the ten characteristic acts of righteousness. The *Vizhuppataththu* or ten merits are: (1) right forgiveness and mercy; like the tree which protects a man engaged in cutting it down, with shade, the renouncer does no harm to the man who harms him, echoing Christian doctrine; (2) right humility; with no vanity or pride, he considers everything in the world as his equal or better; (3) right, or supreme, equanimity; the renouncer admits no distinction inside or outside; (4) supreme truthfulness; speaking and thinking only the truths beneficial to every living being; (5) supreme cleanliness; being born of right charity, both of mind and of thought; (6) right compassion; trying to think of all living things as one to be treated with all the compassion that one is capable of; (7) supreme, or right, penance; being engrossed in the twelve prescribed penances; (8) right giving up; to be attached to nothing and to give up anything with the least effort; (9) right sacrifice; the contemplating of the supreme virtues and to talk of them and giving of his compassion and knowledge to all; and (10) supreme chastity; to be completely free of the hankering and desire and pursuit of women and sex[1].

One can substitute ten other items of code of conduct for these ten but it is obvious that the author of the *Kural* had the ten Jaina prescriptions of renunciatory qualities readymade to his hand.

The sixth stanza deems renunciation as the greatest thing a man can achieve in this world; nowhere else, neither in Hindu nor in Buddhist scriptures, are we treated to renunciation as the

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1. *uttama-kṣamā-mārdav-ārjava-satya-śauca-saṁyama-tapas-tyāg-ākiñcanya-brahmacaryāṇi dharmaḥ* /
Umā-svāmin, *Tattv-ārtha-sūtra*, IX, 6.

supreme virtue or great thing that any man can do. It is in other disciplines one of the great things; in Jainism alone is renunciation the ultimate great thing.

Renunciation as the Hill of Virtues and the ascetic as standing at the top of the Hill of Virtues is a Jaina concept and conduct that we meet with in Tamil Jaina literature, probably initiated by the *Kural* itself.

In the last verse, the author of the *Kural* does not so much attempt a new definition of the idea of the Brahmin, but accepts the position that the *Śrī-purāṇam* gives of the Jaina concept of Brahminhood. The *Śrī-purāṇam* tells of the group of persons who stood out of the *pūjā* of the first of men, Manu, because they were afraid of doing harm by their acts to the flowers, fruits and other things which might harbour living things. The concern and grace expressed towards all living things set the small group apart and the first King of men, Manu, gave them the sacred thread, called them Brahmins fit to receive gifts from others, giving them a noble status. By referring to the Brahmins as being gracious to all living things, *Kural* refers back to the Jaina concept of Brahminhood no doubt without subscribing to the reigning orthodox Vedic idea of Brahminhood by rites and rituals following the *dharma* laid down for them as a group of men by birth singled out from the common run of people. The idea of grace and compassion towards all living things can be cultivated and hence Brahmin need not be born a Brahmin but become a Brahmin by his compassion and graciousness. This is quite an essential difference between the Jaina concept of Brahminhood and the ordinary Hindu attitude to Brahminhood; it is a ditinction that the author of *Kural* was voicing in definite terms.

IV

The next chapter deals with 'In Praise of Righteousness' to invoking the *dharm-ācaraṇa* of the *chattāri maṁgala* invocations.

In Praise of Righteousness

1. Righteousness bestows distinction and wealth; what more does man want?
2. There is no greater good than righteousness. There is no greater evil than the lack of it.

3. As far as it lies in you, depart not from the path of righteousness; do every thing that is righteous.
4. All that is done in a righteous frame of mind is good, all else in vain.
5. Righteousness consists of steering clear of four things: envy, lust, anger and harsh speech.
6. Postpone not righteous acts; now is the time for them. Your righteous acts will be remembered and remain to your credit at your death.
7. Do you desire to know the fruits of righteousness? Look at these two: one is engaged in carrying the palanquin, the other rides in it.
8. Spend your days in righteous deeds; then you will escape the wheel of life and death.
9. Righteousness alone brings joy; all else is vexation and vanity and deserves no praise.
10. What is good is to be done, what is evil is to be avoided.

The upward march of the human soul is dependant on righteousness and the doing of righteous acts during a lifetime. Distinction in this is reached step by step till you arrive at salvation, the supreme distinction. If renouncing is the last step in the Jaina code of conduct, the pursuit of righteousness is the preliminary step that makes renunciation as the ultimate step possible.

All of the religious codes of conduct pursue and praise righteousness; only the terms are different and the emphasis on certain qualities different. The Jainas lay the emphasis on *ahiṁsā* as the supreme righteousness. *Ahiṁsā* is distinguished as joy-giving or not producing pain under any circumstances.

The uniqueness of the Jaina doctrine is evident when Tiruvalluvar includes avoiding harsh speech as one of the four pillars of righteousness; harsh speech should be avoided, beceuse it produces pain to the hearer. But the universality of the *Kural* code of conduct is obvious in spite of the Jaina emphasis on not giving pain, on being gracious to all. In discussing the fruits of righteousness the poet gives a concrete example, depending on fate and *karman*, according to the Jaina way of life; he who rides in the palanquin does so because of his acts of righteousness done in an earlier life, leading him to the good fruits in

his next life. The other who did not do good deeds is forced to carry the palanquin as one of the bearers; it is the fruit of his evil acts.

Karman, fate, etc. is part of the Indian thought, but the sharpness of division, present status, and birth, and enjoyment, all within righteous dimensions, are more defined in the Jaina ethics. And the poet of the *Kural* pointing out to the concrete example of the palanquin-bearer and the palanquin-rider is emphasizing the common Jaina ideas of fate and *karman*. Things, material fruits of the earth, are dependant on righteousness; not only spiritual life and salvation. The author is writing a code of moral conduct in the material world and not refining the material into the spiritual. He points to material fruits as the result of righteous acts, in essence a Jaina concept which later came to be more or less accepted by Hindu and other thinkers.

CHAPTER IV

An Overview of the Contents of the Kural

Having looked at the first four invocatory chapters of the *Kural*, we find the scheme following the prescription laid down by Śrī Kundakunda Ācārya in his Prakrit text and perhaps according to a long tradition present from long before his days of the *chattari mamgala* invocations. According to the scheme:

cattāri maṁgalaṁ
arahaṁtā maṁgalaṁ
siddhā maṁgalaṁ
sāhū maṁgalaṁ
kevali-paṇṇatto dhaṁmo maṁgalaṁ

The four most auspicious things in the world are:

cattāri loguttamā
arahaṁtā loguttamā
siddhā loguttamā
sāhū loguttamā
kevali-paṇṇatto dhaṁmo loguttamā

I bow in obeisance and praise the four:

cattāri saraṇam pavvajjāmi
arahaṁte saraṇaṁ pavvajjāmi
siddhe saraṇaṁ pavvajjāmi
sāhū saraṇaṁ pavvajjāmi
kevali-paṇṇattaṁ dhaṁmaṁ saraṇaṁ pavvajjāmi

Now in this short chapter I propose to take a look at the whole of the *Kural* without going into details of each moral prescription to get at what the author of the *Kural* was trying to do.

From what has been said so far, we get an idea that the book, *Kural*, is not a religious or metaphysical text book of the Jainas.

It is addressed to the common run of people who are sure of the role, of *karman* and fate, the fear of heaven and hell, of the consequences of good and evil deeds, and who are aware that making wealth by some means is necessary for living well and whole. Such wealth should be made by fair means—more than the English spirit of tradesman. Tiruvalluvar would have agreed with the trader who wished to make wealth saying that for that purpose, "honesty is the best policy." That Tiruvalluvar instead of taking up threatening attitudes about the heaven-and-hell theory, and of good-and-evil in the abstract, opts for saying, for instance, "Right means can give you wealth in this world and heaven in the next, what more do you want of life?"

A quite logical question indeed which is full of the spirit of humanism, not deceiving the other even if he were deceivable, and not taking advantage of another if such advantage can be taken with impunity, but opting for righteousness in every context, the consequences being what they might be but usua-ally expected to give you good if you have been righteous and if you know how. Even while talking of the virtues of a wife, apart from obedience, chastity, and other things, the poet of the *Kural* says that the wife who knows "how to live within the means of her husband" is a great help in domestic happiness and family life, a wholly commonsense and worldly point of view.

A son who makes others, perhaps, themselves fathers also, exclaim "What good deeds this father should have done to merit such a son!", is the best of sons. A friend who helps in crises of human making, is the greatest friend. And so on. The intent of the poet of the *Kural* is not to set up as a moral or a spiritual *guru*, talking from a lofty pedestal but as one of the common folk from the level of understaning of the common man, taking him along with him on the path of righteousness.

Even the observation, "truth is the best which harms no one and the insistence on not speaking harshly because it will harm others", apart from being Jaina in principle, in the long run might stem from the observation that we indulge in truths that harm and in speech that gives pain. We have been subject to it in adition to having initiated such things as pain and harm. If you would not be pained avoid truth that harms and refrain from

speech of any kind. The unruly tongue does harm, says the poet, but it does the man who poossesses it more harm than it does others. In many instances he hoists the evil-doer with his own petard.

"Do not remember or nurse the grievances about a man who does you harm; the harm that he has done you will turn on him, and do him more than any you can do him", he says. Jaina or not, the idea is an appeal to direct life as lived in the most moral channels so that it might help the two-fold division of Jaina life, ascetic and householder, a Jaina and Buddhist division which Triuvalluvar wholly accepts. But Buddhists did not devote great attention to non-ascetics and the way they should live to be of the greatest benefit to the ascetic order among them, whereas the Jainas were particular in taking the lay brethren along with them.

II

The Jaina ways of asceticism, knowledge and righteousness allow for a sufficiently morally well informed and well laid out and well defined moral path to be followed in the pursuit of material affairs. So the Jaina religion as well as Jaina thinkers lay down certain principles for their following and a life of utility and distinction of the lay persons in the daily world of material affairs. The laity might consist of the agriculturists, traders and pursuers of other avocations allowed to the Jainas, or might be of rulers, their ministers, their advisors and those called to high office in public life, the commoners and the princes.

The moral code underlying the behaviour and observance might be the same, but the prescriptions for each, in his station, will be different. The *Kural* lays down the moral code, lays down conduct rules, for princes and ministers and the like as well as for the commoners and the householders.

Before glancing at the chapters dealing with the moral conduct for princes and others, let us glance at what is prescribed by Jaina moral law-givers for the commoner, not holding high office, but pursuing humbler but still noble vocations like trade, agriculture, etc.

I quote from Dr. Jyoti Prasad Jain's monograph, *Religion and Culture of the Jainas* (third edition, 1983, published by the Bharatiya Jnanpith).

Code for the Laity

Lay aspirants, householders of both sexes, take the world as it is, and try to live their life with as much piety as each individual possibly can, depending on his or her aptitude, background, circumstances and environment. They instinctively pursue, and are, for the best part, devoted to activities relating to the production, distribution and consumption of meterial goods. These economic activities involve labour, mental and physical, and produce wealth and the wherewithals so that he (or she) may enjoy the fruits of his labour, satisfy his basic needs, taste comforts and luxuries and indulge in sensual and aesthetic pleasures.

For these, producing (*artha*) and enjoying (*kāma*) activities (*puruṣārthas*) people need no religious or spiritual inspiration or guidance. Jainism does not deny, nor is it opposed to this *joie de vivre*, any of the joys of life. It, however, advises all that a third *puruṣārtha* activity, the *dharma-puruṣārtha* may also be added as a guiding factor in regulating the other two classes of activities. One must produce, acquire and earn wealth by putting in as much hard work, skill and foresight as he is capable of, but only by lawful means. He may certainly enjoy the fruits of his labour, but he should do so again in a lawful way. (This lawful way of enjoying life, making wealth and getting on with others is the theme it would seem in the main of the *Kural*.)

Lay Seekers

Thus, in order that people may pursue their mundane activities lawfully, without harming others physically or mentally, become good citizens and ideal members of society, and get apprenticeship training for a career of spiritual development, with liberation from *saṁsāra* (the world of births and deaths) as the ultimate goal, a graded code of conduct and behaviour has been prescribed. These lay aspirants are called *śrāvakas* (women, *śrāvikās*), because their religion primarily consists in listening to the beneficial advice incoroprated in the scriptures, or preached by the *gurus*, as and when they (the laity) can spare time for it, and in trying to act up to that advice as best as they can, that is, as much as their circumstances and inclinations permit.

Oridinarily a person born of Jaina parents, or in a Jaina family, passes by the name Jaina, by virtue of the accident of

birth. He or she habitually and customarily follows the practice prevailing in the family, such as: the adoration of the *Jina*, usually by going to the temple, obeisance to the *gurus* (Jaina male and female ascetics), veneration of the scriptures, abstinence from eating meat and drinking spirituous liquors, and taking food before sunset, drinking filtered water and so on. He may be doing these things generally, without giving a thought as to why he is doing so. If, however acquiring a preliminary knowlege of the fundamentals of religion, one is convinced of their truth and efficacy, he is a Jaina by conviction, be he the one originally by birth or adoption.

In fact a person does not become a true Jaina, unless and until he acquires the requisite minimum comprehension of the essential nature of the soul and nonsoul together with their mutual relationships, and develops a firm faith, based on his transcendental experiences of reality, which equip him with a correct attitude and proper perspective. The *samyag-darśana* is however an abstract quality, not easily discernible even by the subject himself. It is only generally presumed and taken for granted and the seeker tries to cultivate the qualities, detailed earlier, which are supposed to be the outward manifestations and indications of that spiritual experience.

Kinds of Lay Seekers

Thus a lay seeker may be a Jaina by birth, adoption or bias, that is *pākṣika*; he may be Jaina by conviction, that is *naiṣṭhika*; or he may be a *sādhaka*, i.e. *samyag-dṛṣṭi*, right believer, because he has acquired *samyag-darśana*, if not real, at least practical[1]. The last mentioned one when he takes the vows of a *śrāvaka* is called a *vratin*. According to another classification, *bhadraka*, *samyag-dṛṣṭi*, *vratin*, and *pratimā-dhārin* are the four types of lay seekers.

One may not be wearing the label Jaina and yet may be a Jaina seeker, a veritable lay seeker. (It is to these classes of lay seekers who have not labelled themselves Jainas that the maxims of Tiruvalluvar seem to be addressed primarily; in spite

1. *pākṣik-ādi-bhidā tredhā śrāvakas-tatra pākṣikaḥ* /
tad-dharma-gṛhyas-tan-niṣṭho naiṣṭhikaḥ sādhakaḥ sva-yuk //
Āśādhara, *Sāgāra-dharm-āmṛta*, I, 20.

of stated sentiments in the text offered as proof, it can only be offered as a sort of speculative proposition here.)

Eight Cardinal Qualities (aṣṭa-mūla-guṇa)

The eight primary, or cardinal, qualities of a lay follower are:

(1) Abstinence from taking meat, including fish, eggs and other animal products, except milk and milk products.

(2) Abstinence from drinking wine and other spirituous drinks.

(3) Refraining from eating honey squeezed out of live honeycombs.

(4-8) Avoidance of indiscriminate and unchecked indulgence in the five sinful practices; injury to other living beings; falsehood; theft including robbery, cheating and misappropriation; unlawful sexual relations; and unlawful acquisitions of material possessions.[1]

Sometimes abstinence from indulging in gambling, prostitution, adultery and sport (hunting animals and birds) and from the eating of the fruits of certain trees like the banyan, pipal and fig, the five *udumbaras*, are also included among the eight cardinal qualities.[2]

Accessory Rules

In the first instance, a number of rules, known as *bhadraka* (gentlemanly) or *mārg-ānusāra* (accessory to the path) are advocated for the guidance of a novice lay follower in his day to day practical conduct and behaviour. They are in number seventeen, or twentyone, or thirtyfive, according to different authorities, but many of the qualities advocated are common. These rules are: to earn one's living lawfully; to pursue one's economic, pleasure-giving and religious activites without conflicts; to keep one's expenditure without the limits of one's income; to avoid

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1. *madya-māṁsa-madhu-tyāgaiḥ sah-āṇu-vrata-pañcakam|*
   aṣṭau mūla-guṇān-āhur- gṛhiṇāṁ śramaṇ-ottamāḥ||
   Samanta-bhadra, *Ratna-karaṇḍa-śrāvak-ācāra*, verse 66.
2. *madya-pala-madhu-niś-āsana-pañca-phalī-virati- pañcak-āpta-nutīḥ|*
   jīva-dayā jala-gālanam iti ca kva-cid-aṣṭa-mūla-guṇāḥ||
   Āśādhara, *Sāgāra-dharm-āmṛta*, II, 18.

misuse of money; to undertake a task according to one's capacity; to specialize at least in one branch of learning, art or industry; to take proper and wholesome food; to observe cleanliness of person and environment; to live in a proper and suitable house; to avoid residing in a habitation or locality which is not peaceful and congenial to one's own way of living; to espouse a suitable person; to bestow due care, protection and maintenance of wife, children and other dependents; to have love for one's country and to uphold national character, ideologies and culture; to avoid doing things contrary to the customs of one's country, social group or family; to adopt fashions of the place and times one lives in, that is adaptability; to follow the lead given by old and experienced persons; to respect the wise and the pious; to have love for the good; to avail opportunity of listening to religious discourse; fear of sin, i.e., to fear from committing sinful acts; to cultivate a sense of duty and responsibility; to be ready to serve fellow beings; to develop decent behaviour and manners; to avoid talking ill of others; to refrain from wickedness; to avoid being cruel; to be amiable and sweet in speech; to be amicable; to be impartial; to be tolerant; to have an yielding disposition, as opposed to obstinacy or stubbornness; hospitality, charitability, generosity of heart, gentility, popularity, i.e., to try and win the love and esteem of others; to be kind and compassionate; gratefulness, prudence, modesty, humility, to avoid being vain, proud, conceited, arrogant or haughty; honesty and truthfulness to avoid hatred; to refrain from being jealous; to try not to give way to anger, greed or abnormal sexual passion; to try to practise self-control; to save oneself from being deluded; and to have a comprehension of one's ultimate goal.

(This seems to exhaust the whole gamut of possible human behaviour as simply put together thus; and most of these as topics dealt with by the poet of the *Kural* and the themes make the topic of whole chapters sometimes and sometimes are dismissed with one or two appropriate verses. It is evident that the poet of the *Kural* should have drawn up a list of moral activities for his own guidance, some of which he expatiated upon in *Kural*.)

The wholesome qualities and general rules of personal and social conduct and behaviour are intended to give a person a

distinct character and make him or her a good healthy and law-abiding citizen, a lovable fellow being, in short a true gentleman or gentle woman. Moreover, the cultivation of these qualities paves the path of spiritual progress. The regular ethical code and rules of discipline prescribed for a lay seeker have their utility and significance only after the ground is prepared in the manner stated above. The preliminary or accessory qualities constitute the necessary equipment for a person before he is ready to pursue the higher religious life in a mentioned way.

Twelve Vows

The right conduct of lay followers begins in a way by the adoption of the eight cardinal qualities (*aṣṭa-mūla-guṇa*) and conscious effort to cultivate the fifty or so accessory qualities mentioned above. He also gives up indulging in the seven evil pursuits (*sapta-vyasana*[1]), namely eating meat, drinking wine, gambling, thieving, adultery or fornication, prostitution, sport or hunting. But one's actual and regular initiation into the Path is marked by his or her specifically taking the vow to observe the twelve *vratas* which comprise the five *aṇu-vratas*, three *guṇa-vratas* and the four *śikṣā-vratas*.

The five *aṇu-vratas* are so called because they are only lesser, partial and limited and qualified vows.

The first vow demands that one must not intentionally injure the feelings of any other living being, either by thought, word or deed, himself or through an agent, or even by approving such an act committed by some one else. Intention in this case implies ulterior or selfish motive, sheer pleasure, wantonness and even avoidable negligence. The aspirant thus vows abstinence from intentional injury to, or killing of, life, for food, sport, pleasure or some other form of selfish purpose. He can and should however use force if necessary in the defence of the country, society, religious institutions, family life and property with defensive and protective violence (*hiṁsā*). His agricultural, industrial, occupational and diverse living activities do involve

1. *dyūta-krīḍā palaṁ mady-ākheṭ-āsteya-para-striyaḥ/*
veśy-eti vyasanāny-āhur- duḥkha-dān-īha yoginaḥ//
Medhāvin, *Dharma-saṁgraha-śrāvak-ācāra*, II, 159.

injury to life, but it should be limited to the minimum possible through carefulness, cleanliness and due precaution. A lay aspirant who has vowed to observe *ahiṁs-āṇu-vrata*, therefore, obsolutely abstains only from committing intentional *hiṁsā* and not the other types which are unavoidable and sometimes necessary in the lay state in which he or she is.

The second vow, *saty-āṇu-vrata*, demands that one must abstain from telling lies and taking recourse to falsehood in speech or actions, to use cruel, harsh or shocking or abusive words, to ridicule or backbite or in flattery and even saying such truth as may harm others and do injury to the feelings of others.

The third vow *acaury-āṇu-vrata* is to abstain from thieving, stealing, robbing, looting or misappropriating others' property, and includes abstinence from cheating and using dishonest and illegal means in acquiring any worldly thing. The fourth *aṇu-vrata*, *śīl-āṇu-vrata* is to abstain from having sexual relations with anybody but one's own lawful spouse.

The fifth *parigraha-parimāṇ-āṇu-vrata* requires an imposition of limits on one's needs, acquisitions and possessions and implies the use of the surplus for the common good.

The lay aspirant is warned also to guard himself against committing certain transgressions and infringements connected with these lesser vows such as: tying up living beings or keeping them in bondage, mutilating them, beating them, overloading or starving them, in the case of the first vow; preaching falsehood, divulging other peoples' secrets, forgery, misappropriation and disclosing the private talk of a man and his wife, in the case of the second vow; avoidance of adulteration, abetment of theft, refusal to accept stolen property, any violation of government laws and use of false weights and measures, in the case of the third vow; avoidable matchmaking, intercourse with an unchaste married person, prostitution, unnatural offence or sex perversion and inordinate sex desire, in the case of the fourth vow; and to exceed the limit set by oneself with regard to landed property, movable effects and riches, servants, pet animals, and other worldly goods, in the case of the fifth vow.

The three *guṇa-vratas*, socalled because they are intended to enhance the value of the *aṇu-vratas* manifold, are *dig-vrata*,

deśa-vrata and *anartha-daṇḍa-vrata.*[1] The first lifelong vow limits one's worldly activities to fixed points in the different spatial directions. (This Jaina prohibition was what the Hindus later adopted as one of their virtues, the virtue of never crossing the seas and oceans. The crossing of seas and oceans, for whatever reason, produced demerit according to the Hindus.) The second is a vow to limit such activities to a fixed period only. And the third is not to commit unnecessary oral offences, such as talking ill of others, preaching evil, doing inconsiderate and useless things, manufacturing and supplying of instruments of destruction, reading and listening to bad literature. (The Jaina cult, the moral code of prohibitions, including the reading of bad literature as an act of evil is noteworthy. How we of the modern world specialize in bad literature!)

The four *śikṣā-vratas*, so called because they are intended to prepare the aspirant gradually for the discipline of ascetic life are *sāmāyika, proṣadh-opavāsa, upabhoga-paribhoga-parimāṇa* and *atithi-saṁvibhāga.*[2] The first of these is vowing to devote some time everyday, at fixed hours, once, twice or thrice, preferably thrice at sunrise, noon and sunset, to the contemplation of the self and attainment of equanimity. The second is the vow to keep total fast on the eighth and the fourteenth day of each fortnight of the month of the Hindu calender. By the third vow the aspirant puts a limit daily on his or her enjoyment of consumable things for that day. And the fourth is the vow to take one's food only after entertaining with a portion some ascetic recluse, a pious or a needy person, who happens to come uninvited; he sits to dinner only after he has waited long enough for an unexpected guest with whom he could share his food.

Six Daily Duties

The six daily duties of a Jaina householder are: adoration and worship of the deity (*Deva* or *Jina*); veneration of, and attendance on, the *gurus*; study of good books, particularly the

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1. *dig-deś-ānartha-daṇḍa-virati-sāmāyika-proṣadh-opavās-opabhoga-paribhoga-parimāṇ-ātithi-saṁvibhāga-vrata-sampannaś-ca/*
   Umā-svāmin, *Tattv-ārtha-sūtra*, VII, 21.
2. *gṛhiṇām tredhā tiṣṭhaty-aṇu-guṇa-śikṣā-vrat-ātmakaṁ caraṇam/ pañca-tri-catur-bhedaṁ trayaṁ yathā-saṁkhyam-ākhyātam//*
   Ṣamanta-bhadra, *Ratna-karaṇḍa-śrāvak-ācāra*, verse 51.

scriptures; practice of self discipline and self control; meditation, observance of fasts and curbing desires; and charity. This daily charity usually consists in providing food to lay persons, holy men, and women and to the indigent, providing medicine and medical aid to the ill and to those who are in need of them, education and education facilities for those who are in need of them, and assuring a sense of security and fearlessness to those under duress or are being wrongfully oppressed, persecuted, exploited or tyrannized over. This fourfold charity, or philanthropy, which covers almost all shades of it, is the most important of the positive aspects of the Jaina way of life, and in substance, comprises selfless service to humanity, as a pious duty done out of love for all and unstinted compassion for those in want or distress, the Jaina motto being that "Piety has its roots in compassion."

III

It looks on the face of it a rather exhaustive moral code covering almost all aspects of human behaviour and not reducible to some simple negative commandments of an overall kind, this code of the Jainas which confronts us, and we find that the author of the *Kural* takes his chapter titles often from Jaina presciption for lay contact if indeed he was responsible for the chapter titles, in the *Kural*, a fact of which we might not be able to be certain sure. He chooses and picks the themes on which he writes from the vast array of ethical conduct predicated for the lay Jaina man and woman. I shall take other opportunities, elsewhere, of talking about what the author says in individual chapters, devoted to the exclusively Jaina codes, the *aṇu-vratas*, and others, but here I shall satisfy myself with simply enumerating some of the themes and topics under which the moral maxims occur in this book of moral maxims, the *Kural*.

He has a whole chapter on sweet speech as an essential item in the code of conduct of the lay householder interested in the Jaina code of ethics. On charity, on gratitude, on being impartial, on doing your duty, on not coveting another's wife, on tolerance, on not being envious, on not backbiting, on not indulging in frivolous talk, on fearing sinful acts, on not

doing evil unto others, on not killing, on the transience of life, on renouncing worldly things, on overcoming desires, on making friends with the worthy, on being considerate, on eqanimity, on lustfulness, on bought women's pleasures, on not indulging in drink, on not gambling, on being ashamed of unworthiness, are some among the chapter titles of the *Kural*, on Jaina code of ethics.

Some prescriptions laid down in the book might bear examination in view of the Jaina code of conduct for laymen but the list of titles alone seems to conform to a consideration of many things that attracted the attention of the Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras and made them prescribe rules ond regulation for the wise and moral conduct of life, not only for spiritual adherents but even for the worldly pursuits, making life lived under an accepted moral code, fruitful and meaningful.

The poet of the *Kural* does not labour the ascetic virtues so much as the moral conduct of the layman interested in living the good and righteous life, as agriculturist or trader or as just the head of a family, making wealth or striving to meke wealth, and sharing it with the community in so far as it is possible for fuller and more admirable or admired life. He stresses not so many abstract or metaphysical ideas, as much as the observance of good conduct, moral acknowledgement of the life that would be considered virtuous, meritorious and leading to heaven, heaven being commonly understood as the enjoyment of material as well as good things, even after death.

"Make wealth by fair means; it will increase your wealth here and assure you of merit in the other place. What more should you want in life?" he asked rhetorically, sure that no man wants more.

At one place, talking of wealth well-earned and the impossibility of earning it by fair means under a bad or false or evil ruler, he says that "he who prospers under an evil ruler should be evil himself", putting the thing in no uncertain manner without departing from the Jaina position but making it universally obvious, a truism in fact. It is the ease with which the poet transforms hard and rigorous Jaina rules in the *Kural* to an observable practical and easily followed moral principle and code of conduct that surprise the modern reader. He makes reason and intelligence the ruler of moral destinies, not spiritual or

religious principles. So the *Kural*, inspite of being deeply religious, still gives the appearance of a most secular, worldly, text.

One of the cornerstones of Jaina thought, perhaps not less important in the ultimate consideration is the idea of compassion. Let us look at what Tiruvalluvar says about compassion in his text. It is chapter 25 in our text. It rings true as Jaina coin in quite a few respects, though the attempt of the poet is to universalize the whole to a rarer concept if it were possible.

1. The wealth of compassion is the wealth of wealths; other kinds of wealth can be found among the meanest of men.
2. Follow the good path seeking it; even otherwise conflicting codes agree in prescribing compasion as a supreme virtue.
3. Those who have compassion in their hearts, do not enter the world of suffering, or the dark.
4. The wise ones say that the evils a man dreads in his soul will not approach him who is compassionate at heart and kind towards all.
5. The wise ones say that he who acts without compassion is one who has forgotten virtue in his past life and forgotten the suffering that will dog him in this present life.
6. The world of the winds bears witness to the fact that he who is compassionate will not suffer want or pain.
7. A man without compassion will not inherit the kingdom of Heaven, as he who has no wealth will not inherit this world.
8. The poor, by an act of fate, might become wealthy one day; but men of no compassion are undone for ever.
9. He who gives without compassion in his heart, is like the ignorant fellow seeking the Supreme Truth.
10. Remember when you turn in anger on one who is weaker than you, that you yourself are weak in the presence of those that are stronger than you.

Describing the wealth of compassion as a treasure beyond compare, a treasure of treasures, he suggests that compassion is born in great and good men towards all living beings, thus delineating the compassion as the entire Jaina idea, of compassion

in the traditional belief of Jainas that compassion is at the basis of all meritorious acts. The admonition of the poet, saying to follow the good path, and adding that you should seek it of yourself, reminds one of the Jaina spirit which admonishes you to seek the good and the right path which can come only on seeking, and by an act of knowledge, self chosen as it were.

In verse four of the Chapter, the *Kural* poet repeats his accustomed trick, saying that he who is compassionate is purged of fear; a trick of expression that gives a definite proverbial terseness that informs quite a few of the successful admonitions of the poet. By calling the wise ones to witness in the fourth and fifth stanzas the poet seeks to give his epigrams the authority of writ and tradition; especially regarding compassion, he can refer to Jaina seers and asectics than whom none have been more compassionate in the Indian atmosphere. Adopting a worldly but moral attitude the poet says that only the compassionate in the world will inherit heaven; those who have no compassion towards all living beings great and small, are not fit for heaven as those who have no wealth cannot be fit for this world.

The very first verse which talks of the wealth of wealths, that is compassion, seems to dog the whole chapter. The Jaina concept of knowledge and ignorance finds expression in Tiruvalluvar's phrase in comparing the ignorant fellow who is seeking supreme wisdom; he will never arrive at it; he will not know when, and if, he arrives at it, being an ignorant fellow. The man without compassion in giving is compared to the ignorant fellow in verse nine. It is perhaps a Jaina simile in essence though I have not been able to find the exact equivalent. The Supreme Truth in the Jaina context is sixfold by definition, *jīva, pudgala, dharma, adharma, ākāśa* and *kāla*.[1] There six substances as posited by the Jaina doctrines are mentioned in this verse and the ignorant fellow, it is said, cannot know the Supreme Truth unless acquainted with the sixfold nature of reality. The commentator Kavirāja Pandithar quotes a number of later day Jaina

1. *jīvā puggala-kāyā āyāsaṁ atthi-kāiyā sesā|*
amayā atthitta-mayā kāraṇa-bhūdā hi logassa||
Kundakunda, *Pañc-āsti-kāya-prābhṛta*, verse 22.
ede kāl-āgāsā dhaṁm-ādhammā ya puggalā jīvā|
labbhaṁti davva-saṇṇaṁ kālassa du ṇatthi kāyattaṁ||
Ibid, verse 102.

Tamil texts to prove his point in interpreting this stanza but it is obvious that the ignorant being denied Supreme Truth or Reality is an essentially non-humanistic act, for it is certain that it is the ignorant who need knowledge all the more.

IV

The chapter on compassion is followed by the 26th chapter which deals with *Not Eating Meat*. If compassion and the ideas of it are large abstractions, the poet of the *Kural* concretizes it in its application, deriving the urge not to eat meat as compassion born of love of all living things.

Again I shall quote the entire chapter of ten verses in translation for it is eminently quotable, is brief and offers two major points in the controversy about the religion of the author of the *Kural*.

ON NOT EATING MEAT

1. It is not compassion, or kindness, to eat flesh to preserve your own.
2. Riches are not for those who are unmindful of them; compassion is not for him who eats meat.
3. The man with military might minds not the good; the man who eats meat will also be like him.
4. Not killing is compassion; killing leads to compassionlessness. It is unworthy of compassionate men to eat killed animals.
5. Not eating flesh is conductive to the continuance of life; he who eats flesh of killed animals will surely not escape Hell.
6. If the world desists from buying meat for eating, the killing of animals for meat will stop.
7. If one who eats flesh realises that what he is eating is the carcass of an animal, he cannot but refrain from eating it.
8. Those who have clear insight into life will certainly not eat meat.
9. One can perform a thousand sacrifices to the fire; but it is more meritorious not to eat flesh.
10. He who refuses to kill and partakes not of flesh, him would all praise (go).

Not eating flesh, fish or bird or even animal products was one of the cornerstones of Jaina thought from the beginning. None other had been more strict about it from the earliest known times.

The fundamental idea of Lord Ṛṣabha instructing the human beings to eat agricultural products by raising them in the fields tilled by them assumes fresh significance in the context of not eating meat. Apart from the general concept of not eating meat because one is full of compassion for all living things and should soon refrain from killing animals so that the flesh might be eaten and their own flesh might be preserved, there are two distinct ideas in these ten verses which are identifiable as proving the point that the author of the *Kural* was a Jaina author.

The first occurs in verse six that which says that if one desist from buying meat for eating, the killing of animals for meat will stop. This is said to refer to an ancient and long continuing controversy with the Buddhist position, that you should not kill animals with your own hands, but can buy the meat obtained by the butcher killing the animal for meat. Thus the Buddhist monks and nuns and laymen and laywomen were not prohibited the eating of meat. The poet of *Kural* tries to nail the idea permanently in its grave by saying that animals will be killed for meat, so long as we buy meat from butchers, eat it, and claim that it is no sin—the animal was not killed by me, it was killed by the butcher.

The Jaina view would be to look at the butcher with horror.

Rev. G.U. Pope in his notes in relation to this verse places it in the context of the Jaina-Buddhist controversy squarely: "This points to the controversy between the Buddhists and the Jainas. The former might not slay, but might eat the slain. The latter with more consistency, were forbidden to eat, or slay. This is one of the verses in *Kural* which might be considered a sort of definite proof that the poet of the *Kural* was a committed Jaina."

The other evidence about the Jaina character of Tiruvalluvar occurs in the ninth verse which says tersely "A thousand sacrifices in the fire will not exceed the merit of not eating meat." Though the poet does say sacrifices in the fire, he means the rituals justifying the killing of animals in sacrifice. The verse gains in strength by this interpretation; the preserving of one

life can be more meritorious than the killing of a thousand animals in sacrifice. The tenor of the idea is clear; the poet demonstrates his Jaina faith in preserving and tending life than in killing it, even in sacrifice, to the fire and the Hindu gods for earning great merit. These two verses might be said to prove, directly, and without any shadow of doubt, that Tiruvalluvar repudiated both Buddhist and Hindu religious practices.

V

I shall quote again a whole chapter of ten verses, Chapter 92 of *Tirukkural* on a very mundane subject which the poet lifts from its very morass into sublimity. This chapter deals with *On Bought Women's Plesures*. The verses are full of elementary common sense displayed with skill and quite a lot of forbearance and compassion, a supreme virtue with Jainas.

On Bought Women's Pleasures

1. They wear selected bangles and speak words of love without any love for you in their hearts. They desire only your money. And they will work your ruin.
2. It is meet that one should ascertain for oneself the character of bought women who seek only their own gain even when they speak over so virtuously. It is wise to avoid them.
3. The embrace of a woman bought is like the embrace of a corpse in a dark room.
4. Those who know the true nature of grace and knowledge will keep away from mercenary women who profess love only for the sake of one's money.
5. Those who are graced with true knowledge will not seek the fleeting joy in the arms of a woman common to many men.
6. Those who desire fame will never seek to embrace the shoulders of women who embrace all men for money in the pride of their fleshy beauty.
7. Only he who is not firm in his virture will seek women whose minds are on other things, even while professing love for him and submitting to his embraces.

8. Those who cannot evaluate the true nature of the joys that bought women give are like those possessed by evil spirits.
9. The fine shoulders of the bought women are the hell into which undiscerning men plunge.
10. Women of divided hearts, gambling and drink, are the close associate of those deserted by good fortune.

The verses would seem to indicate that the poet acknowledges the existence of bought women in a society, but thinks of them as the companions of those without discernment in thought or nobility in soul. The Jaina compassion of the author is evident in his refraining from saying anything evil, or bad, except that they are of divided heart, and are like corpses; he refuses to say anything essentially unkind of them, but he reserves all his scorn for the man who seeks bought women and the pleasures they can give because of fine shoulders, their arts and other qualifications. Brilliant and restrained but nevertheless in clear ringing tones, the author of the *Kural* drives home the moral he would like to drive home thus proving his consummate mastery over words and the ideas he handles.

There is no need to guess about it but the next two chapters deal respectively with *Gambling and Avoiding Alcoholic Drinks.* The ordering of the chapters might have been, it seems, the author's after all, for he does tell you as he does in the already quoted chapter that he intends to deal with two matters in the next two chapters.

VI

Chapter Ninetythree is *On Not Indulging in Alcoholic Drinks.* I shall quote it in full as well as the chapter on *Gambling* to prove that the author of the *Kural* did not indulge in the fulminations against these things as the later day Hindu saints did (Pattinathar or Arunagiri) for tickling the salacious or sensation loving palates of their readers or listeners but strictly out of a sense of a larger morality, keeping down the references to the least sensational, but driving home a point, often a moral point, with great skill and emphasis.

The imperfections of English translation of a rich traditional

association-ridden Tamil is to be borne in mind when reading this translation of mine. One cannot do full justice to the poet in his many nuances of thought and expression. It would require another Valluvar to do it in English, but the attempts of the translator given are approximating attempts, in all cases my own, without letting any commentator interpose himself between me and the text as I get it.

1. Those who love alcoholic drinks will not be feared by their enemies and what glory they might have won otherwise will vanish briefly.
2. It is good not to drink; only those who do not care to be considered good men, will dare to drink.
3. A mother looks on a drunkard's joy with sorrow. How unhappy the wise are when they see the socalled happiness of those who drink.
4. He who is guilty of the abomination of drinking, on him will the fair maid called modesty turn her back.
5. To pay for drinks to buy temporary ignorance is ignorance indeed.
6. In what way are the dead and the sleeping different? They are equally ignorant of things happening about them. He who drinks buys sleep and poisons himself to death.
7. One who goes on drinking secretly and with eyes slanting will be discovered soon enough, and will lose all sense of shame and will be laughed at by people.
8. He who claims that he does not drink but drinks in secret will betray himself to others as soon as the mouthful has been taken.
9. To preach to a drunkard words of wisdom is like searching for the man under water with a torch.
10. Looking at the antics of a drunkard, cannot a sober person think of his own antics when drunk and avoid alcohol?

In exhorting men not to drink, the poet uses all the arms that a writer is endowed with for driving home a moral, he tries irony, he tries argument, he tries even joking. Think of your own drunken antics when you see the drunken antics of another :

Does one pay for buying ignorance that can be temporary even though you do not pay for such wisdom as moralists of the author of the *Kural* try to impart to you? And he appeals to the effect of drunkenness in the social company of your compeers what will the fame of a drunkard be among his fellows? He will forfeit glory, even if he has it in a brief while. Society laughs at you however much you try to keep secret your drinking; as soon as the first mouthful of drink goes down your throat, you are betrayed. This is a multi-pronged attack on the evils of drink in quite a short compass of ten verses.

VII

Even more pertinent are the remarks of Tiruvallvar on gambling which was considered a royal vice by the Hindus. The epic of the Hindus with which the poet of the *Kural* was no doubt familiar makes the exile of the Pāṇḍavas turn on the turn of dice and the sufferer of the exile is even called, not ironically but in all seriousness, as *Dharma* all that was righteous. We have to remember this context, if we have to understand rightly the horror of gambling in serious Jaina minds. These three chapters on *Bought Women, Alcoholic Drinks* and *Gambling* occur in the section meant for rulers in *Kural*, but they nevertheless apply to the ordinary householder as well. It is better to bear that in mind, for even when advising princes and rulers, the poet was interested in making what he was saying universal for all human kind than for a certain narrow section of it.

ON NOT GAMBLING

1. Even if you are sure of winning, do not play dice; your present gain in dicing is only the golden bait which the poor fish swallow before being landed.
2. Gamblers who win one and lose a hundred, can they ever travel the path to profit and prosperity?
3. If a king indulge in rolling dice constantly, all his wealth will depart into the hands of his rivals.
4. Gambling is the fixed road to certain povery; it also leads to total misery and loss of reputation.
5. The ruler who for ever sought the gambling den and

the gamblers, is now among those who were prosperous once!

6. Gambling is elder sister to the Goddess of Fortune (that is she is the Goddess of Evil and Misfortune). Gambling will surely reduce men to starvation and woe
7. Even inherited wealth and mobility will quickly turn to ruin if forsaking righteousness, pride of property and hope of salvation, one spends one's time in gambling.
8. Dicing can destroy one's wealth, can make one false, do away with all one's virtues, and bring forth troubles endless.
9. He who is devoted to dice will soon be left with no food clothing or wealth; his fame and learning will leave him.
10. One loves life even in the midst of miseries; evey if it deprive him of the joys of living, the gambler will love his gambling.

In all these admonitions to the moral life, what the poet of the *Kural* steadily poses is the importance of one's reputation in the society to which one belongs. On not drinking and not gambling are almost social compulsions as posed by Tiruvalluvar, and not merely moral propositions; they are also destructive of the wealth by which you have to make the most of the world you live in. The virtues and vices presented in the *Kural* are posed in a social, and often a material world, context, never as religious or spiritual immorality. In this, I think, Tiruvalluvar had a wholly intrinsic Jaina attitude to morality, unlike the Hindus in general who were also interested in the moral values of life but posed them as necessary mainly for religious and spiritual salvation, not for altogether a social purpose.

This social tone of Tiruvalluvar is dominant in his chapters dealing with evils like covetousness, on lustfulness and the like; even qualities like truth, kindness and, of course, charity assume a social context and significance. The author of the *Kural* was not interested in mere individual salvation or religious emencipation, he was concerned with man as a social being, a difference that has not been pointed out so far by commentators on the *Kural*. It is a difference that not only distinguishes Jainism from Hinduism, making it more humanistic in the Jaina context, and

clinching the larger argument of Valluvar having been a Jaina. If we grant that he was a Jaina by these evidences, there is no questioning in the identification that Prof. Chakravarti makes, no doubt circumstantially and speculatively, about Śrī Kunda-kunda Ācārya having written this secular, worldly, book as well. Given the time and the place, the identification can be recommended to all, though it might not matter much, except for scholarship, whether such an identification as made is true or not. The *Kural* remains one of the great glories of Tamil and Indian and world literature, because of its obvious social, secular and Jaina morality.

CHAPTER V

Of Rulers, Ministers and Public Activities

The Brahminic cults of the Āryans were not allowed to gain supremacy in India without a fight. There were quite a number of cults of pre-Āryan and post-Āryan emanation that bid fair to swamp Āryanism, the caste system and the rituals of animal sacrifices that was the major profession of Brahmins. The authority of the Vedas (written by no man and apparently of no human origin) was not accepted by many sects. In this fight for supremacy of the Brahmins, it was obvious that every class was interested and the two cults of Buddhism and Jainism are identified with the revolt of the socalled Kṣatriyas against the Brahmins. Whether this could be substantiated might be a problem for meticulous students and researchers in history, but the fact that the founders of Buddhism, as well as the much older sect of Jainism were reputedly Kṣatriyas, sons of rulers identifiable in their time, adds substance to a somewhat speculative proposition and gains in probability.

And more than the proselytizing of the common people, the *hoi polloi* as it were, the conversion of kings and rulers of the land was sought by leaders and initiators of cults. This is evident indeed from the history (in their early days) of both Buddhism and Jainism, following the success of which Hindu orthodox faiths sought the patronage and support actively of rulers and kings to establish their hold first on the king and then on the kingdom by virtue of the king being a Hindu. There were many rulers down from the days of Buddha and Mahāvīra oscillating, if we are to believe somewhat apocryphal and often unauthenticated legends and stories, between the faiths implied in Buddhism and Jainism. The Hindu code of conduct began with the ordinary people who voluntarily submitted themselves to the tyrannies of caste so that they might gain a heavenly

advantage in a future world. The Jainas preached a moral code which would materially profit their followers, especially in the present worldly life as well as promise heaven after death.

The Buddhists promised only annihilation at death and were interested in larger metaphysical speculations and did not so much cultivate the ordinary folks on whom, however their daily sustenance rested. There might have been a number of other cults at the time aimed at rulers and common people, each valid in its own attempts and able to convert a few or many, as the case may be, to their points of view.

Concerning ourselves with the Jaina code of ethics which the *Kural* purports to be, we find that it is aimed in certain parts of it, at an actual ruler, or a mythical ruler, whom only Prof. A. Chakravarti has tried to identify as a patron of Kundakunda Ācārya, a minor chieftain of the Pallavas ruling from Conjeepuram. He gives his name as Śiva-kumāra Mahārāja, identifying him as Śiva-skanda Pallava who reigned as a chieftain before the Pallavas attracted fame and became a well known line of rulers in south India in the context of their battles and conquests, both in the North and in the South. Pallavas have been considered by historians as aliens in Tamilnadu, but their court language, the language of his inscriptions etc., in the earlier period, was Prakrit, slowly giving way to Tamil. And they contributed to Tamil arts and literature in one of its most glorious and outstanding periods, in architecture, in dance, in music, as well as drama.

We have some negative sort of evidence about the influence of Jainas as well as positive evidence. The early centuries of development of Tamil literature in its Saṅgam period, in its subsequent moralistic and epic periods, stretching over a millennium, might be considered predominantly Jaina in content and appeal, though scholars still contend that it is not. But the actual literary evidence is positive and quite incontrovertible.

Saṅgam, as a technical word, is undoubtedly of Jaina origin, and the beginnings of Tamil literature are traced to the persons of the Saṅgam age. The contribution to all the body of Saṅgam poetry might not be wholly Jaina; why should it be? But it was, in the majority, and its emphatic contributions were by the Jaina. The Jaina element in the oldest strata of Tamil poetry is heavy and cannot be gainsaid, however one argue about it.

I can speculate about it, critically offering the proposition that this earliest strata is in the form of 'protest' by the Jainas against the then current|Sanskrit imperialist usage and thus the Tamil anthologies came into being. Thus only could they have come into being, as anthologies, and not as literary works, each with an individual existence. Anthologies require group effort. The mere fact that they were made available in anthology form put together in books that have continued as such should argue that they had somewhat of a given purpose; the purpose being a Jaina effort to create a wide-ranging, different, unique, poetic context, in protest against what was obtaining in the rest of the land. The moralistic works and their age offer us plainly recognizable Jaina morals and a social code of ethics based on moral doctrines, according to the Jaina practitioners.

The epics, written by whomever they be, have Vaiśyas or Śūdras for heroes and heroines, a thing that would never have happened if they were inspired by Hindu principles. The Jainas came to be in the ascendant among the rulers of the Tamils from a century or two before the *Kural* was composed by Tiruvalluvar; he probably added to the weight of authority of Jaina principles, making the moral code popular in the social context of the day, thus preparing the way for the acceptance of Jainism by rulers as well as by the people. And one proof of this occurs when we are told that the Śaivite and Viaṣṇavite devotees who rose in ecstasy singing all over the Tamilland after the seventh century had themselves been Jainas, converted to Śaivism or Vaiṣṇavism as the case may be and they strove to convert the rulers of the land from Jainism to their taken religious points of view.

If Jainism had not been that popular as a religion, these conversions would not have been important at all. And there is the positively gruesome evidence of an otherwise mild Pāṇḍya king expiating for his sin of having been a Jaina by killing publicly thousands of Jainas in his land and country; the historical evidence to confirm the actuality of this event may be wanting, but it is 'religiously' preserved in the Madurai temple and to which Prof. Chakravarti himself has referred. The wish might have been father to the deed, which did not, we hope, happen, but there is evidence of the wide, sweeping, evidence of the earlier Tamil adherence to Jaina ways of life and conduct. Such a hold was possible in the old days by well-developed

presentations of law, such as the author of the *Kural* had formulated and such as the Āryan Hindus had promulgated through their Vedas of no human origin but revealed scripture. There is historical evidence to show that all the major rulers, and many of the minor chieftains of Tamilnadu, were, at some time or other between the second century B.C. and the seventh or eighth century A.D., Jaina by persuasion. It will be the glory of the Tamils to believe that such a state obtained because of an universally accepted code of moral behaviour for man, by name the *Kural*, composed by the Saint Valluvar, in or about the first century A.D.

Wooing the ruler was an important thing to be done in the Jaina scheme of things. I am not scholar enough of Jainism to find out whether other texts about how rulers should conduct themselves and behave in given circumstances are available in the length and breadth of Jaina writings. I do not think, however, that the *Kural* is unique in addressing a ruler; and it can certainly be posited that the ruler addressed by Tiruvalluvar was, though at that time unknown to history or fame, he was a promising scholar to profit by the advice of Saint Tiruvalluvar and that the Pallava empire rose to preeminence in history by adopting some of the wise rules and regulations for conduct laid down for them by a sage like Valluvar. I say that it should be a matter of pride, and not of dispute.

We have, in a previous chapter, glanced at the Jaina ambience and atmosphere prevailing in Tamilnadu in the words of Prof. A. Chakravarti. I take occasion here to quote in a wider sweep of historical circumstances from a modern authority on the history of Jainism after Mahāvīra's *nirvāṇa* and how it spread and encompassed whole regions and rulers, in the hope that we might, in the process, gain a glimpse into Tamil history and popular institutions.

I

I am quoting this long passage from Chapter III, History of Jainism after Mahāvīra, Internal History of the Church, Spread and Expansion, Royal Patronage and Popular Support, Vicissitudes of Fortune, all the necessary portions making some excisions for space considerations, from Dr. Jyoti Prasad Jain's

book, entitled *Religion and Culture of the Jainas* (Bharatiya Jnanpith, third edition, 1983; pp. 18-31).

Internal History of the Church

For a few centuries after the *nirvāṇa* of Mahāvıra, the internal history of Jainism is characterized by schismatic tendencies, growing complexity in the church organization, gradual decline in the volume and substance of the original canon, development of religious dogmas, and a shift in the centre of gravity of the new brotherhood which spread slowly to the west and south of Magadha its original home.

After the Master's *nirvāṇa*, Indrabhūti Gautama, the Gaṇadhara, headed the Church for the next 12 years, followed by Sudharman (12 years) and Jambū (38 years), all the three being *Kevalins*. Then came one after the other, five *Śruta-kevalins* who possessed full and complete scriptural knowledge but could not attain the spiritual status of an *Arhat Kevalin*. The total period covered by them was 100 (or 116) years. Bhadrabāhu I was the last of them, and after him the succession diverged, that of the Śvetāmbaras running independent of that of the Digambaras.

The two sects had not yet come into existence but the beginnings of the great schism which led to their birth and the conseuquent division of the church, are traced to the terrible famine lasting for twelve years, from which a considerable part of north India, particularly the Magadha country, severely suffered. This event is ascribed the large scale migration of members of the Jaina *Saṅgha* (ascetic order) to regions lying south of the Vindhyas, especially Karnataka. Their descendants, a few centuries later, began to claim themselves as belonging to the *Mūla-saṅgha* (the original order) and call themselves Digambara (sky clad or naked) in order to distinguish themselves from the ascetics of the other section who had begun to cover their bodies partly with a piece of white cloth, hence called Śvetāmbara (white cloth). The latter represented those who stayed behind in Magadha in spite of the famine. By the third or second century B.C. they too had to emigrate, going first to Ujjain in central India and further went on to Saurashtra and Gujarat which thereafter came to be their strongholds. The separation of the Digambara from the Śvetāmbara became complete, final and irrevocable, it is said in 70 A.D. (or 81 A.D.) (The author of the

Kural, if Jaina, thus would seem to be from the undivided sect.)

There was also a third section of the community, the *Yāpanīya*, the *gurus* of which tried for centuries to bring about a reconciliation between the two divergent sects, though without any success. Similarly since about the close of the Maurya rule (circa 200 B.C.) to that of the Gupta (circa 500 A.D.), a period of some seven centureis, Mathurā was a prominent centre of Jainism and a veritable meeting place for the different sections of the community. Its *gurus* developed their organization independent of all the others, yet acted as a unifying force for them, and several of them have been owned by both the sects equally. The Jaina establishment at Mathurā centred round the great Jaina *stūpa* there, which, even about the beginning of the Christian era, was believed to have been built by the Gods and is supposed by archaeologists and orientalists to have been as old as the time of Pārśva (8th Century B.C.). This site has, during the last one hundred years or so, yielded an unprecedented wealth of about two thousand years old Jaina epigraphical records, sculptures and other antiquities.

The early Jaina monks were very conservative in so far as the writing down of their scriptures, or even anything else, was concerned, because they were afraid, lest by redaction, the scripture should suffer from corruption and a composition of independent work give rise to controversies. Their vow of possessionlessness and the rigid rules of asceticism forbade them to reside in any one place for long, or associate unduly with householders and urban life, which made it almost impracticable for them to pursue literary activities. Moreover they thought that their religious life was so well organized that they could vouchsafe the integrity and genuineness of whatever portion of the original teaching of the Lord had come down to them by word of mouth. (It was under these conditions, and far away from Mathurā and the other centres of Jainism in its early historical phase, that Tiruvalluvar wrote his *Kural* as a literary expression of a great kind, sure of its being the best, one of the best of the literary works of the time. The *Kural* breathes a certain air of finality and meditation on right lines that the poet was reacting to general conditions against literary work except perhaps the purely religious one. This has to be borne in mind when reading of the condition prevailing in

those days which seem to have no connection with Tiruvalluvar or the *Kural* or even Tamil land.)

Yet the fact remains that soon after Bhadrabāhu I, gradual dimunition and deterioration in the original canonical knowledge had set in. As time went on the pace of the decline accelerated, particularly owing to the disruptive tendencies which led to a break-up of the unity of the order and the birth of several schismatic groups, as also the growth of differences though minor, with respect to dogma, doctrine, traditional accounts, practice, usages etc.

Several attempts were therefore made to rehabilitate the canon. Soon after the country had recovered from the effects of the famine aforesaid, the Magadhan branch convened a conference council at Pāṭaliputra (modern Patna in Bihar) to try to put in order the sacred lore that had fallen into decay because of the calamity and the consequent emigration of Bhadrabāhu I and his followers. About the middle of the second century B.C., another attempt was made in a council held at the Kumārī-parvata (Udayagiri-Khaṇḍagiri hills) in Kaliṅga in Orissa at the invitation of the emperor Khāravela. It seems to have been attended largely by the *gurus* from the South and those from Mathurā. The latter seem to have taken the cue to start on their return the Sarasvatī Movement for the redaction of the surviving canon and the production of book literature. The result was that within a period of two hundred years or so, those who came to be called the Digambaras redacted important portions of the original canon preserved in their circle and also compiled a fairly large number of treatises directly based on the original teachings of the Lord. Pre-eminent among these pioneers were Bhadrabāhu II, Kundakunda, Guṇadhara, Dharasena and Umāsvāti.

(It has to be noted, in our consideration of the *Kural* and its author, that Śrī Kundakunda's name appears early in this list of compilers and redactors of the original canon and derivative Jaina literature. While the strictly religious canons were more important it is quite possible that, all things considered, a moral code for the general public at a time when Jainism was expanding fast and was reaching concentric new ground all over India and could have been an activity of Śrī Kundakunda who was eminently fitted, by virtue of his religious Ācārya-hood as

well as by his learning in Prakrit, Sanskrit and the local language Tamil, and by his proximity to a ruler who was ambitious in the person of the Pallava Śiva-kumāra Mahārāja of Conjeepuram. Absolute proofs may be wanting, and not be produced or available for production at this time of day, but it can well be speculatively offered, and circumstantial evidence points to it, that like the Sarasvatī Movement at Mathurā, the South gave birth to a literary movement in the regional language for the people at large preparing the ground for the further worldly and material advance of Jainism. It is in this context that the history of the Jaina church becomes important in a study of the *Kural*, its author and his times. If religious canons are only partially preserved as might be imagined, if the author of the *Kural* had not made an attempt to preserve the moral code of conduct for Jainas entire, one wonders what would have happened to it in course of time. That the *Kural* exerted an impact on the Tamils, goes without saying; all later Tamil literature, and the Tamil people, can bear witness to it. Jainism was such a force in Tamilnadu that a vast Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite movement had to rise and sweep the land and sweep the Jaina influence violantly away from Tamilnadu. And nowhere is the Jaina impact more acknowledged than in Tamilnadu, when we find that the Hindu revivalists make altogether exaggerated claims about what they did to the Jainas. All the while the greater number of devotional poets were converts from Jainism having been trained in the strict moral code of the Jainas—a debt they owed no doubt to the author of the *Kural*, if truth were told. One of the four Śaiva poets, originators of the movement, is credited with having written, in his Jaina days, a full scale commentary on the *Kural*. If only a future Dr. Swaminatha Iyer could discover the palm-leaf version of it for us, how revealing it would be!)

To take up the tale of the Jaina church a little further in the words of Dr. Jain. The other section which came to be known as the Śvetāmbara continued to resist redaction for several centuries more. About the beginning of the fourth century A.D. its *gurus* convened for this purpose two councils simultaneously one at Mathurā and the other at Valabhi (in Saurashtra) but it was only in the middle of the fifth century A.D. under the leadership of Devardhi-gaṇi, finally succeeded in redacting whatever portions of the canon, and in whatever form, had

survived in their own circles. These activities of the pioneers of the two sister communities opened the gates for a flood of exegetical literature and numerous independent works on diverse subjects, religious as well as secular, written in several languages prevailing in different parts of the country during the last two thousand years. (By this account, we shall have to think of the *Kural* as a pioneering work of a Jaina kind, long before other literature came on the scene, at least four-five centuries latter. It was secular, the first secular work in Jaina literature perhaps, setting a noble lead.)

With the passage of time, both the communities have continued to develop, almost independent of each other, into a number of sects, subsects, divisions, subdivisions, evolving the respective rituals, images, usages and practices. Yet there are no fundamental doctrinal differences between the two principal sects, the Digambara and the Śvetāmbara, at least no more than there are between the Brahmanical Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas, the Buddhist Mahāyānists and Hīnayānists, the Christian Protestants and Roman Catholics, or the Muslim Shias and Sunnis, rather they are less marked. The ascetic orders have no doubt differed in their practices, at least in some of them, but so far as the laity is concerned there has hardly been any noticeable distinction.

Spread and Expansion of Jainism

Modern historians, even those who admit the historicity of Pārśva, usually begin the account and seem to concede the fact that Jainism must have existed not only before Mahāvīra, but perhaps even before Pārśva. They usually begin the account of the progress and gradual diffusion of this religion with the last Tīrthaṅkara. They are often found making statements such as: in the beginning Jainism was confined to the five cities of Rājagṛha, Vaiśālī, Mithilā, Campā and Śrāvastī, or, to the countries of Magadha, Mithilā, Aṅga and Kośala, which is almost the same thing; that Mahāvīra and his monks did not travel beyond Sthūṇā in the west, Aṅga and Magadha in the east, Kuṇāla in the north and Kauśāmbī in the south, that is roughly the modern states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh of the Indian Union; and that this religion went off its centre in eastern India to certain other parts of the country through migrations of Jaina monks spread over several centuries.

When natural calamities or other potent circumstances caused *en masse* emigration of Jaina monks from Magadha to Ujjain or Ujjain to Gujarat, Kaliṅga, the Deccan or Karnataka or south India, they appear to have been sure to find their coreligionists in those lands, who would welcome and entertain them. They did not go as preachers of a new religion to foreign, strange or alien regions, nor as mere refugees. There is evidence to show that as early as the beginning of the fourth century before Christ, there existed a flourishing Jaina community in Ceylon that is several decades before Bhadrabāhu's emigration to south India. And in course of time the new creed also gradually diffused throughout the length and breadth of India even beyond its frontiers, almost in all the directions, although occasionally and only to a small extent. No gainsaying that the Jainas lacked the proselytizing zeal of the Buddhists, principally due to certain facts inherent in their renunciation-based philosophy and ascetic discipline. They exposed Jainism to rivalries which were at times accompanied by even violent persecution at the hands of followers of other religious systems. It was not so with Buddhism which succeeded in spreading over the greater part of Asia, was almost completely wiped out of India, the land of its birth, by the end of the first millennium A.D. (The Jaina religion survived in India mainly because of its moral code of a humanistic and universal kind, a code which we see at its best in the *Kural* in Tamil.)

Royal Patronage and Popular Support

In the time of Mahāvīra, the greater part of India was divided between sixteen premier states, the more important of which were the monarchical kingdoms of Magadha, Kośala, Vatsa and Avanti and the republican confederacies of the Vajjis and the Mallas (Of course, the south Indian kingdoms of the Colas, the Pāṇḍyas and the Ceras which were as important culturally as the northern Indian states, were never taken note of at any time by historians, at least when they do not come from the South. But both Hindusim and Jainism had to depend on the south Indian states and rulers for preservation and development in their purer forms, right down history, a fact which has to be admitted even if only reluctantly by Indian historians. The member clans of the confederacies together with several

other autonomus clans and the Nāgas of Kāśī including the branch established at Magadha were contumeliously nicknamed the Vrātya-kṣatriyas by Brahminical writers like Manu, who regarded them as being outside the pale of Brahmanism, probably because they were the followers of Śramaṇas and, in many cases, had been the devotees of Pārśva. (In like manner the Tamils were to try to dismiss Valluvar as untouchable, belonging to the Valluvar caste, being outside the pale of Hindusim, being a drummer boy born. It might have been because of his Jainism, though he was no ruler, but only a ruler of men's minds. His literary output was, though impressive but being outside the pale, not acceptable to that orthodox conventional fold of scholars called the Tamil *Saṅgam* at Madurai, though it did not exist at all. The ancient intolerance of Indians has to be placed in a new context today to be understood.) A majority of these people naturally adhered to the Lord Mahāvīra when he began his ministry, not merely because he had been born amongst them, but because they were Śramaṇas like him. The royal families of the kingdoms were also friendly or related to him and practically nowhere did his followers meet any resistance or opposition.

A race for supremacy had already started among the states and Magadha under Bimbisāra and his even more ambitious successor Ajātaśatru, was emerging as the most powerful claimant for imperial power. Ajātaśatru was succeeded by Udāyı. All these three kings were followers of Mahāvīra's religion which seems to have continued to be the faith of the family, till its supercession by the earlier Nandas, about the middle of the fifth century B.C. who also patronized Jainism. King Nandivarman of this dynasty conquerred Kaliṅga and brought from there the image of Ṛṣabha, the national deity of the country and installed the image in his own capital, Pāṭaliputra. His line was succeeded by the later Nandas who are known to have had Jaina leanings and had Jaina ministers. About 325 B.C. Candragupta Maurya, the Sandrakottas of the Greek writer, ousted the Nandas, established his own dynasty in Magadha, and extended the Magadhan empire far and wide. He was one of the most powerful monarchs of the world in his times and was a follower of Jainism. His political *guru*, guide and prime minister Cāṇakya also appears to have been a good Jaina by faith. About

297 B.C. this emperor abdicated the throne in favour of his son, Bindusāra, to lead the life of a Jaina ascetic and passed his last days practising penance on the Chandragiri, a hill at Śravaṇabelgola in south Karnataka. Bindusāra followed the religion of his father, and his successor, the great Aśoka, is also said to have been a Jaina till he was converted to Buddhism. Aśoka's grandson Samprati, who succeeded to the major part of the empire with his capital at Ujjayinī, is remembered as one of the greatest patrons of Jainism. He is said to have done as much for Jainism, as, if not more, the Buddhist tradition says Aśoka did for Buddhism. Daśaratha who had succeeded on the eastern part of the empire, patronized the Ājīvaka sect which later merged into Jainism.

Early in the second century B.C. the Brahminical Śuṅgas usurped the throne of Pāṭaliputra by assassinating its last Maurya king. They also set up branches in Ayodhyā and Vidiśā (Central India) and were actively antagonistic to the Śramaṇa systems, like Jainism and Buddhism, and zealously contributed to a revival of Brahminism. The Kaṇvas who succeeded them were like the Śuṅgas Brāhmaṇas and pursued the same policy.

From about 150 B.C. to about 250 A.D. (which incidentally is the age in which the sage Tiruvalluvar wrote his work, the *Kural*) certain foreign faces like the Indo-Greeks (Yavanas) Parthians (Pahlavas) and Scythians (Śakas and Kuṣāṇas) dominated the political scene and many of these, that is, the Śaka-kṣatraps of Mathurā, the Kuṣāṇas of Puruṣapur (Peshawar) and Mathurā and the Kṣaharātas and Western Kṣatrapas patronized, or were quite tolerant of, Jainism. During this period, their also existed several indigenous local dynasties of which those of the Mitra kings of Kauśāmbī, Ahicchatrā and Mathurā favoured Jainism; Mathurā in particular developed as a very important centre of Jainism. The same age produced the Emperor Khāravela (*circa* 150 B.C.) of Kaliṅga and king Vikramāditya (57 B.C.) of Ujjayinī who shone with great brilliance on the Indian firmament and were good Jainas. (To this period too belongs the advance of Jainism among the south Indian kingdoms and rulers which have not been studied at all, though the history of the smallest kingdoms of the North have been plotted. No wonder a great text book for rulers was practically put

together on his own by the poet of the *Kural*) About the middle of the third century A.D. several republican peoples, the local Mitra kings and the Nāga and Vākāṭaka chiefs, succeeded through a concerted effort in bringing about an almost total extinction of the power of the great Kuṣāṇas, but Jainism does not seem to have suffered by the change.

Thus by the end of the third century A.D., Jainism as revived by Mahāvīra, had taken firm roots throughout India. Starting from Magadha, its original home, it had spread to Kaliṅga in the southwest, Mathurā and Malwa in the west and the Deccan and Tamil lands in the south. Although it had lost its hold in Magadha, it had grown powerful elsewhere. The royal patronage it had won initially may have been one of the causes of its rapid growth and expansion in the past but now on it ceased to enjoy such royal favour at least as far as north India was concerned. It however continued to retain the support of the middle classes. Moreover the loss suffered in the North was made good by the favour shown to it by a number of the ruling dynasties of the Deccan and south India which for some centuries came to be regarded as the strongholds of Jainism.

Further history of Jainism is immaterial as far as this study of the *Kural* as a Jaina document is concerned. The Jaina contribution to Tamil has not been acknowledged as much as it should be; it covered a thousand years, the first ten centuries of the Chrsitian era. To a certain extent, the Jaina contribution to Kannaḍa has been studied and more or less acknowledged.

But this historitical account will not be complete unless the picture of Jainism in Ceylon is sketchily presented. The Buddhist chronicles of Ceylon speak of the existence of Jainism in Ceylon from about the fifth century onwards. Maurya inscriptions in Tamilnadu speak of Jainism in Tamilnadu and it is evident that Jainism reached Ceylon throuhg the Tamil regions.

To quote Dr. Jain further in this matter: Much of the early Tamil literature is of Jaina origin and authorship which is indicative of the flourishing state of the religion in south India in the early centuries of the Christian era. Even an order of Jaina ascetics came to be designated as the Draviḍa-saṅgha, the beginnings of which are traced to the Jaina saint Samantabhadra of the second century A.D. But it was also in the Tamil lands that in the sixth and seventh centuries Jainism had

to suffer from the violent persecutions at the hands of the Śaiva saints. Appār and Sambandhar, who succeeded in converting from Jainism to Śaivism the Pallava king of Conjeepuram and the Pāṇḍya king of Maduri. This was the first serious setback that Jainism received in the South.

Thus we get a vision of the early Pallava kings of Conjeepuram having been Jainas in their days before achieving fame; in the days of their great glory the first four or five of the kings were Jainas, as others before them, forefathers of their line might have been, especially if Śrī Kundakunda, identified as Tiruvalluvar, the author of the *Kural*, is considered as the *guru* and sage of the court of a little known Pallava king known as Śiva-kumāra Mahārāja and who is said to have lived in the first century A.D., Śrī Kundakunda's years being possibly 52 B.C. to A.D. 44.

II

The *Tirukkural* is addressed mainly to the man in the street and seeks to guide him through the intricacies of ordinary, worldly, morality as the poet of the *Kural* understood it. The author was interested in the moral ordering of the worldly life of the householder in regard to making wealth, tilling his lands and producing wealth by trade and in raising a family, in educating his boys, and in his domestic felicity, and above all in playing. He treats of various ways in which situations are to be met so that such meeting of situations will be conducive to the moral good of the society to which he expects his readers to conform so that he might have, acquired, kept his fame and good name. The concern of the poet is here to steer the individual so through the mazes of conduct that he does not infringe not only moral provisions but also social provisions. Valluvar's view of the individual is consistent with his humanism; the individual is important, but the society in which he lives should be almost the perfect one, and each individual has to contribute his best to it.

But society, as the poet of the *Kural* was aware of it, was constituted not only of wealth-makers, producers of food, and good women, wives and children who brought reputation and fame to their parents, but it consisted also of the rulers and

their men who were in a position to affect the social life of those who followed them.

Nearly a third of the *Kural* is concerned with instructions to an ideal ruler on how to run his affairs, choose his ministers, friends, spies, and enemies, properly and with magnanimity, goodwill and with good reputation, winning victories not only over enemies but over himself as a befitting Jaina ruler. The ideal of a ruler that emerges form the *Kural* is more Jaina than Hindu; he talks of forts or armies, spies and ministers, but he does not talk of temple building or sacrifices with pomp and glory as an advisor, if non-Jaina, would have done. This alone is sufficient to prove that the belief in a moral order of things for both commoner and king obtained with Tiruvalluvar and gives evidence of both his humanism and Jainism.

In my rather brief and necessarily skimpy study of Jaina literature which is available to me in English and Tamil, I have not come across any other work of the nature of advice to rulers, ministers etc. on the conduct of public affairs though I cannot definitely say that they do not exist. The only book of the kind is the *Kural*. The claim that Kauṭilya was a Jaina might not be generally upheld, or conceded, though he was a minister to a king who had a known predilection for Jainism and who ended his life by traditional accounts, as a Jaina ascetic having followed Bhadrabāhu in his migration to Karnataka. Kauṭilya, by traditional accounts, was a Brahmin, though he was reported to have been tolerant of the Jainas it does not preclude his being of Jaina faith.

The characteristics of the Jaina ruler as exemplified by the maxims of Tiruvalluvar might be neither unique nor ideal in that he was talking of a conventional pattern of rulership, though informed by the larger Jaina ideals of *ahiṁsā*, and subject to ideas of *karman*, fate etc. with a moralist, humanistic bias.

Usually chapters 39 to 108, both inclusive, covering seventy chapters comprising of 700 *kurals*, make up the part of the *Kural* which deals with the ruler, his minister, conduct of affairs of state etc. Some of these chapters deal with subjects and themes of a moral nature which might be said to apply to the householder, the ascetic, etc., as for instance the chapters on learning, on not gambling, on not drinking spirituous

liquors, on cultivating friends that are worth while, and being wary of friends not worth while, on not being base, on justice, and the like. Even then, it appears that the poet of the *Kural* was more concerned with public affairs and the conduct to them in the context of his times, more than most poets of a moral stature would have been, partly because he as a poet and thinker, had an exact idea of the role of the individual in society and the role of society in the larger moral life of a people. Hence the importance he attached to public conduct of leaders of society, like rulers and ministers, though according to him, as we shall see in a later chapter, the ascetic orders were the true leaders, both in worldly and spiritual life; they prescribed and defined the norms.

As has already been described, the preliminary section or part of *Tirukkural* consists of four chapters in praise of God, rain, renouncers, and righteousness, in that order. The second book dealing with day-to-day ordinary life is entiled in Tamil, *arathu pāl* or the book of *dharma*, that is, the code of conduct of householders, ascetics and the like. It begins with the fifth chapter, dealing with married life and ends with the thirtyeight chapter entitled Fate.

III

The second book of the *Kural* is larger and consists of seventy chapters dealing with the life of public men as it were, and is entitled *Porutpāl*, meaning the book of material things, to deal with *artha*, the ordering and wealth of society. It begins with chapter 39 which deals with kings and rulers and ends with chapter 108 which deals with base men. Many of the chapters in this section might also be included in private moral conduct, though the poet has thought fit, no doubt to place them here out of a sense of social commitment. Chapters on themes like not gambling, not drinking, not seeking bought women's pleasures, on friendship, on learning, on learned assemblies, and the like might belong elsewhere also, but the general trend is clear; the poet wants the common person to be not only an individual in his won moral right but also a reckonable part of society well ordered and morally based, taking his cue and example from the rulers he can look up to the minis-

ters who can ensure justice and advisors who can assure of being fighters for just causes and for victories if won only fairly.

And the wealth and prosperity of a community according to the author depend on the individual as well as the public men. It is in this context that when the poet says, "Death to the God, the creater of this world, if he should declare that one should be poor and die of starvation; it were better that the world be destroyed, before a single person is allowed to starve because of want." He also says that "Only he who is evil can prosper under an evil government." The implication is that the poet of the *Kural* is a wholly 'committed' writer, a writer committed to justice and morality and *ahiṁsā* which he thought of as ultimate virtues in both societies and individuals.

I do not believe in writing about and about what Tiruvalluvar says. I would prefer much rather that he speaks directly to the reader in his own words than in any interpretations of a *fancial*, or farfetched, nature that I can offer out of my modern sophistication and cleverness. The author of the *Kural* does it but so simply. I make no bones about quoting from the text, albeit in translated approximations, entire chapters sometimes or piecemeal quotations from the 700 verses. The difficulty with the *Kural* is that you find it extremly quotable and impressive whatever portion you look into. I do not keep the order of the books, but quote almost at random, selecting my *kurals* for some necessary but brief comment where or when possible.

Great kings are distinguished by four things—courage, charity, knowledge and persistence in that knowledge. The insistence on knowledge, and again persistence in that knowledge, might be construed as a Jaina requirement, if we translate knowledge as right knowledge as, no doubt, we should. The ruler should no less than the commoner, avoid harsh and unkind words. Reverting again to the qualities of a great king in the last verse of the chapter he wants him to have generosity, grace, justice and the good of the people at heart. Though couched in general and universal terms one can easily see that in including grace with justice, desire for the good of the people with generosity, instead of heroism for instance, the author of the *Kural* is seen to be positing a moral world than a heroic one. Any fight or battle, should be a just one according to him.

The first verse of the 40th chapter on learning is perhaps the

most often quoted of the *Kural* verses in modern times. It is said of rulers, but it applies equally and with perhaps more force, to others, commoners as well: "Learn what has to be learnt without any doubts; having learnt, follow closely what you have learnt".

This, in nut shell, is what is meant by *trī-ratna* or the three jewels of the Jaina faith: *samyag-darśana*, doubtless perception or the right faith; *samyag-jñāna*, right knowledge; and *samyak-cāritra*, right conduct. The proverbial form in the attempt in the *Kural* comes out clearly in the ninth verse of this chapter. "He who sees the world loving him for loving learning, will himself come to love learning for itself."

A whole chapter on justice (chapter 55) is worth quoting here in full.

1. The way justice is to be administered is to think well without inclining to either side, consult the men conversant with the law, and take a firm decision.
2. The world enjoys prosperity when the heavens send rain; the people enjoy prosperity when the king is just.
3. Scriptures and Brahmin codes and righteousness form the three bases of a king's justice.
4. The king who is known to be just and who loves his subjects, will retain his rule over the world for a considerable time.
5. It will rain seasonally and the harvest yield plenty in a land where the king is just.
6. More than the lance which is sharp, the straight sceptre that does not bend in injustice, brings great victories to a king.
7. The king rules the world and justice rules the king.
8. The king who is not accessible easily, who does not know the knowers of the law, and who is unjust, falls low in rank and loses the esteem of the people, and ultimately ruins himself and his kingdom.
9. The king who has the duty of protecting his subjects from the enemy and has to work for their welfare, should not be deemed to be mistaken if he is strict in the administration of justice.
10. The farmer weeds out the tares from his fields in the

interest of a good crop; in the interests of the good men of the land, the king should punish the wicked and kill kilers.

The third verse, as I have rendered it, supplements the Brahmin codes with scriptures and the general idea of righteousness by his sense of justice. I prefer my reading as it seems to be more meaningful; it, however, implies necessarily the anti-Brahmanic attitude perhaps because the poet was a Jaina by conviction.

The Companion chapter (56) on tyranny and injustice is worth quoting also in full.

1. More cruel than the murderer who takes life, is the king who oppresses his subjects with injustice.
2. If the armed dacoit demand 'give' it is oppression; likewise, is it oppression, if the king demand gifts from his subjects.
3. The country of the king who does not daily examine and punish evil-doers, will daily lapse a little into ruin.
4. The king whose sceptre is not straight and who consults no one in the administering of justice, will lose both his country and his wealth.
5. The tears of those who groan under the oppression of a king will wash away his prosperity and might.
6. Just governance is what gives permanence to a king's fame; without justice his fame will wane and disappear.
7. Lack of rain creates a parched thirsty world; lack of juctice creates parched men in a kingdom.
8. If a ruler is unjust, to prosper under him is shameful; it is better to be poor under an unjust king.
9. If the king of a land stray from the just and right path, even rains will fail in the land.
10. The cows will not yield their measure of milk and the chosen ones of the land will forget their scriptures in a land where the king is unjust.

In both these chapters we note that rain is linked up with justice. Even natural phenomena are made subservient to the moral law, truly a Jaina concept and trait. The poet uses Brahmin as a word to signify the learned ones, not the

varṇ-āśrama-caste, which, as a Jaina, he did not subscribe to; nor had the *varṇ-āśrama-dharma* gained ascendancy in the Tamils in the age of Tiruvalluvar.

In the last verse the author refers to the learned of the land as those to whom six duties are prescribed. This sixfold duty of the learned ones finds expansion in Jaina texts and commentaries as learning, instructing others in what one had learnt, worshipping the right things, helping others, worship or offer *pūjā* to the right things, giving and receiving gifts. This might be interpreted as evidence of the Jainism of the poet which, supported by other evidence, clinches the matter somewhat with certainty.

There are quite a number of other things that deserve to be quoted both as evidence of Tiruvalluvar's universality, his Jaina code of morals and the practicability of his advice as laid down: "Remember even the basest among men look like men; there is nothing with which can surpass this resemblance in this world." and "The base among men are like the gods; they do much as they please." This might be a slight exposure of what the Jainas thought of the Hindu array of gods. What are the base fellows of this world good for? They only hasten to sell themselves as occasion offers.

Defining culture, the poet says: "To be of goodwill towards all and to be of noble birth is to be cultured." "To resemble one another outwardly is not true culture, the cultured should resemble each other in cultured behaviour." "The just, the virtuous and the benevolent are praised as cultured in the world." "Even as a joke, reproach is painful; therefore the cultured man exhibits even to his enemies pleasing qualities and behaviour", implying the Jaina virtue of non-paining; it is a supreme virtue, a sign of culture. It is certainly a Jaina concept, 'the attempt not to give pain'. The author carries it further, saying, "Even to those who do him real harm, the cultured man shows himself well behaved." And as a remark on our humanity this can hardly be surpassed, 'for a man incapable of laughter even the brightest day will seem dark'.

It is possible to construct the image of an ideal ruler or leader of men from the verses which deal with the subject in the *Kural*. How much such an image will resemble the moral ordinary person with some special nobility of birth added might be

valid for considering the whole of *Tirukkural* as subscribing to a moral code of conduct, a Jaina one especially. The ends and means controversy that Mahatma Gandhi, for instance, initiated for modern times never have arisen in a wholly moral Jaina world. But Valluvar was not a perfectionist only with regard to values. He advised ordinary men to be perfect in their own way.

CHAPTER VI

Dominant Jaina Ideas In The Kural

There are quite a number of ideas in the *Kural* that are generally recognized as dominating Jaina ideas and conceptions. The foremost of them is *ahiṁsā*; equally important and dominant is the idea of asceticism and its content and value; and perhaps the ideas of a few professions that are consistent with Jaina ideas and quite a few that are not so consistent.

I

We shall examine these ideas one by one in the *Kural* to evaluate the Jaina character of the *Kural*. We take up *ahiṁsā* first.

Ahiṁsā

Ahiṁsā is a most active Jaina idea which comprehensively informs every one of the activities of Jaina life, householder's, ascetic's, or ruler's, or whatever the rank or status or dignity or office one might hold. This *ahiṁsā* is the corner stone of Jaina thought and life and it is to be found at every corner in every nook that we turn to in the *Kural*. The book itself might be said to be composed to establish *ahiṁsā* as a general, not merely as a Jaina, doctrine, guiding the human spirit in its worldly, as well as in its spiritual, material, religious and other activities.

It is however obvious that the poet of the *Kural* does not devote a whole chapter of ten verses to such a subject as *ahiṁsā* though many verses are imbued with the spirit of *ahiṁsā*, its total ambience.

Chapters like that on compassion and on not eating meat, which have already been fully quoted, present *ahiṁsā* in its

various aspects and are inescapably the result of Jaina influence and impact. The principle of *ahiṁsā* leads the poet to describe sweet speech as that which causes no pain to any one. He devotes a whole chapter to it.

1. Sweet speech is born of loving kindness and is free of any deceit and comes from the heart of the righteous among men.
2. Better than even giving with willingness is sweet speech accompanied by smiles.
3. Sweet speech born of sincerity accompanied by a smile can come only through true righteousness and wanting to hurt no one.
4. One who speaks with all his heart sweet words to all pleasing every one and hurting no one, will never suffer poverty.
5. The real ornaments of a man are unhurtful speech and honesty.
6. Evil will vanish and righteousness thrive in the world if one seeks good and always utters words which harm no one.
7. Righteousness here and merit hereafter result from sweet speech; unhurtful speech is the mark of true culture.
8. Sweet speech free of harm to any one brings happiness both here and hereafter.
9. Kind words give great pleasure. Knowing it, why do men insist on speaking cruel words?
10. When kind words are there for one's ready use, if one use unkind words it is like one preferring fruits that are unripe to ripe ones.

The recurrent motive is hurting no one. The author describes penance as that which observes fast and puts up with all kinds of pain, and does no injury to any one. *Ahiṁsā* as penance embracing every living thing on earth is really a Jaina conception.

And speaking in another context, he speaks of being judged by one's own actions, the arrow that is straight can inflict pain, the lute that may bring joy might be crooked. The obvious worth of pain and joy are contrasted with skill here showing where the poet's sympathies lie.

But it is in his chapter on truth that the poet implies the *ahiṁsā* doctrine of the Jainas fully. What truth is, he asks and replies, "truth is that which is capable of doing no harm to any one", a truly main and humanistic description. Even a lie takes the garb of truth, or shall be deemed a great truth, if it bring good to others, without harming any one. And he concludes the chapter saying that "in my search through the scriptures of the world, I have come across nothing as good as truth". Good in this sense means beneficial, capable of producing good to many, as many as possible.

The poet forbids anger and angry words as anger will hurt you and others as well; if being stronger you are angry with a weaker person you will suffer the anger of a stronger man than you and bear the brunt of it.

Chapter 33 which is the nearest to the complete idea of *ahiṁsā* we have in the *Kural*, can be translated as non-killing or else as not hurting any. I give below the translation of the ten verses of the chapter.

Non-killing

1. Non-killing is among the greatest of virtues; to kill produces in its train all kinds of ills.
2. Sharing your food, and not killing, are among the great virtues of human kind according to all the scriptures of the world.
3. Not to kill is supreme among virtues; not to tell a falsehood is second only in the order of virtues.
4. The best of ways for man to follow is the way of non-killing.
5. He who realizes the mutability of things and realizes it, renounces first of all any urge to kill.
6. He who observes the vow of non-killing will have killed the fear of death which kills men.
7. He who, even if faced with death, refuses to kill, is indeed righteous.
8. Riches might bring great relief from want and pain but even to gain riches the righteous man will not kill or hurt any one. Riches gained by killing are the least among riches in the eyes of the righteous of the world.

9. To the eyes of the discerning, a man given to killing if less than a man, he is indeed lowborn.
10. He who kills is diseased in body and lives an ignoble life.

This chapter on not killing is preceded by a chapter (32) on not hurting any one which, taken together with this chapter, might, to a long way to exhaust one half of the aspects of Jaina doctrines and principles, be implied by the word *ahiṁsā*. I give that chapter also in full.

1. Even if it bring you untold riches, do not hurt any one; it is but right that you do not hurt to any one.
2. The righteous man will not hurt even those who do him hurt and are his avowed enemies.
3. Do no hurt or evil even to him who desires to hurt you; hurt brings many hurts in its train and will ruin you.
4. The best punishment you can inflict on those who hurt you is to shame them by doing no hurt to them.
5. Of no use is your knowledge if you know not that the pain and hurt you inflict on others, will come back in turn to you.
6. He who feels pain should certainly refrain from inflicting pain on others.
7. Chief among virtues is the virtue of not inflicting any pain on any one at any time under any circumstances.
8. How can one inflict an injury on another knowing that if like injury were done to oneself, it will pain one immensely.
9. If in the forenoon of the day you inflict injury on another, in the afternoon you will suffer like injury yourself.
10. Evil recoils on him that does evil to others knowingly. Those who do not want to suffer injuries should avoid injuring others.

In these two chapters together the poet of the *Kural* might be said to have given us a working practical philosophy of the principle and application of *ahiṁsā* without any metaphysical implications, not treating it as a religious or philosophical doc-

trine but only as a reverence for all life, comprising fully the spirit of Jaina love for all living beings through the doctrine of *ahiṁsā*.

Rev. G.U. Pope commenting on the verse, "He who, when faced with death refuses to kill, is indeed righteous. (*Kural* chapter 2, verse 5)", contrasts it with the doctrine as presented in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and accepts it, as the supreme Jaina doctrine of *ahiṁsā* at one of its noblest peaks. And the verse that "The best of ways for man to follow, is the way of non-killing. (Chapter 27, verse 1)", might be interpreted as a reference to the basic doctrine of Jainism.

In the eighth *Kural* of the chapter on non-killing, the poet seems to refer to the Hindu way of killing, or sacrificing, animals for wealth and riches; he says, "it is better not to kill even if such killing produce wealth and riches". This might again be seen as a Jaina doctrine in contrast to the doctrine contained in the *Gītā*. In the very next verse, the *Kural* offers us the idea that we should not honour those who are professionally killers of men like priests who officiate at sacrifices as well as soldiers. This accords well with Jaina doctrine for no Jaina could honour a man who has made a profession of killing.

The ninth verse calls a man with a killer's profession low born, indeed.

All this, even if more evidence may, or cannot, be found, about *ahiṁsā*, would prove that the *Kural* subscribes completely to the Jaina principle of *ahiṁsā* in a major measure and advocates it as the real path of righteousness for men to follow.

There might still be quoted another chapter (55), which might be said to contain in some measure the Jaina seeds of *ahiṁsā* in a somewhat practical form. The chapter deals with the necessity of being considerate, though it is talking of the considerateness of kings, might equally well apply to the considerate among common men. "Of what use is a melody if it accord not with song; of what use is your eye, if you have no considerateness (that is kindness to other persons)", considerateness is an ornament to the eye. "Eyes that have no considerateness are indeed holes in the face of man." "Those who have eyes to see will be considerate of others", says the poet.

To bend the idea of considerateness to mean a kind of *ahiṁsā* might look farfetched in modern contexts but in speak-

ing of a ruler with considerateness he was talking of a person who had great opportunities for hurting persons and a king with a considerate eye could desist from doing hurt; it is in that sense that considerateness deserves to be considered as an aspect of *ahiṁsā*.

Two whole chapters and a number of references to the way of compassion, of non-killing, and of not hurting any one, even enemies, with angry or hurting words, is a large prescription for living life the Jaina way. We can take it as proved that the *Kural* is a Jaina work though aimed at no religious bigotry or doctrinaire narrowness or dogmatic rigidity. It is broad based as the moral law universally valid and to be infringed only at one's peril.

A few other considerations about *hiṁsā* and *ahiṁsā* are necessary if we would understand the position of the author of the *Kural* as well as the Jainas in general about the doctrine. I cannot do better than quote from Dr. Padmanabha S. Jaini's *The Jaina Path of Purification.**

"*Hiṁsā* has ordinarily been understood in India as harm done to others; for Jainas, however it refers primarily to injuring oneself, to behaviour which inhibits the soul's ability to attain *mokṣa*. Thus the killing of animals, for example, is reprehensible not only for the suffering produced in the victims, but even more so, because it involves intense passions on the part of the killer, passions which bind him more firmly in the grip of *saṁsāra*. The Jaina concept of *hiṁsā* then is very broad in terms of the actions to which it refers; and the need for abandonment of such actions becomes of paramount importance to the spiritual aspirant."

It is in this context when we turn to the *Kural* where the author says, "You are injuring yourself in being angry with an enemy or hurting another", that we have to understand it as something more than a trick of expression, for it is a wholly Jaina trick of thought and expression to which we see evidence wherever we turn in the *Kural*. If you want to avoid being the subject of harsh words, avoid using harsh words to others. If you give sweet speech, you will get sweet speech in return. Remember you will be pained by such and such an action and

* Published by Motilal Banarsidas, New Delhi, 1970; page 176.

avoid giving pain to others.

Non-violence according to Dr. Jaini is expressed in Jaina doctrines through diestic restrictions and moral codes (such as are to be found in the *Kural*).

The Jainas are known as the primary exponents of vegetarianism in India. Apart from this, the reverence for life which the Jaina doctrine brought to bear on daily life, was not universally accepted at first, though at a later stage, *ahiṁsā paramo dharmaḥ* might have come to be of universal Indian acceptance.

While the *hiṁsā* codes for ascetics are very strict, and almost forbidding and menacing the lay person has to think of *ahiṁsā* only as a sort of *aṇu-vrata* for him, though it is the first of the *aṇu-vratas*, heralding the state of restraints in living which even lay Jainas have to accept.

The first *aṇu-vrata* is *ahiṁsā*. *Hiṁsā* refers to any action accompanied by the giving of pain or the rise of passions. Recognizing that total avoidance of such actions would be impossible for a householder, it is *saṅkalpī hiṁsā* that is totally forbidden for him.* The unintentional harm in *Kural* derives therefore from a sort of Jaina distinction, it would seem. To avoid *hiṁsā* we are told that certain modes of making a living are allowed and considered respectable: government, *asi*; writing, *masī*; farming, *kṛṣi*; the arts, *vidyā*; commerce, *vāṇijya*; and various crafts, *śilpa*.

In practice, however, the followers of Jina have been strongly encouraged to enter those professions which have the least potential for violence, hence statecraft and agriculture have come to be considered somewhat less desirable occupations, while the career of a merchant is seen as most appropriate. The *Kural* talks of makers of wealth, of tillers of the soil and of statecraft, the last at greater length than the other two, perhaps reflecting an earlier dispensation in the Jaina way of life.

The ancient formula, according to Dr. Jaini, prescribes the formulation of a vow: "I will desist from the knowingly, or intentional, destruction of all great lives, *trasa* souls which may be embodied with two senses or more. As long as I live, I will

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* *saṅkalpāt kṛta-kārita-mananād yoga-trayasya cara-sattvān|*
na hinasti yat tad-āhuḥ sthūla-vadhād viramaṇaṁ nipuṇāḥ||
Samanta-bhadra, *Ratna-karaṇḍa-śrāvak-ācāra*, verse 53.

neither kill nor cause others to kill. I shall strive to refrain from all such activity whether of body, speech or mind.

One other factor to note here is the fact that *hiṁsā* in Jaina practice is considered a close kin of lying, for any lie is rooted in a passion. Lying is always volitional and is rooted in some passion or tendency to do hurt to another. The second *aṇu-vrata* of the Jainas for the lay persons is *satya* and the author of the *Kural* defines truth itself as being able to do good to others, anything hurtful becomes automatically untruth*, a very valid definition from the point of view of *ahiṁsā* as a basic principle.

In its broader sense the *satya-vrata* requires great care with regard to all acts of speech, lest they have destructive consequences; thus even a truthful statement cannot be uttered if it will lead to the destruction of a living being. It is thus that we have to understand the *Kural* when it says, "Even a lie takes on the garb of truth if it bring good to others" and "Truth is that which does not do harm to any one." In the Jaina conception, there can be no truth that is destructive of any kind, a fairly humanistic prospect if acted upon.

II

Next to the engrossing and all-embracing principle of *ahiṁsā* that informs Jainism, the most important factor in the whole Jaina way of life, is the total reverence for asceticism that it enjoined.

Asceticism

In general, Indians, of whatever sectarian views, were revirential towards ascetics and asceticism, but none more so than the Jainas. The ideal of asceticism might be said to come into the Indian horizon from the ancient beliefs current in Śramaṇism from which both Buddhism and earlier than Buddhism, Jainism derived. It is as an impact of larger ideas of Jainism that

* *sthūlam-alīkaṁ na vadati na parān vādayati satyam-api vipadi|*
yat tad vadanti santaḥ sthūla-mṛṣā-vāda-vairamaṇam||
Samanta-bhadra, *Ratna-karaṇḍa-śrāvak-ācāra*, verse 56.

ascetics found themselves an honoured body in Indian life.

A recent study of Hinduism, that of Nirad Chaudhury, talks of asceticism as derived from the shirking of responsibility of family and social life by the many souls who, for some reason or other, unfit to hold responsibilities, are also uninterested in being responsible. But such a reading at any historical time will not be possible for Jaina ascetics who were totally socially conscious and were responsible rather than not responsible to society and were for upholding the moral order of the universe among themselves and among those who supported them, the common people. The Buddhists were halfway between the Hindus and the Jainas in this view of the total responsibility of ascetics to society.

From chapter 25 to chapter 38 the poet of the *Kural* deals with ascetics and asceticism but there is a persistence about the theme right from the third chapter devoted in some verses to the praise of the ascetics, right through the chapters on householders and family life, the best acts of which are devoted to treating the ascetics of the order as honoured guests.

We shall deal with the Jaina attitude to guests in a later section of this chapter but confine ourselves to seeing how the poet deals with ascetics and asceticism, whether it is consistent with our glimpse of him as a practising Jaina.

The headings of chapters 25 to 38 give us roughly an idea of what the poet thinks of as qualities and characteristics of ascetics—the order he has in mind upholding the Jaina social polity. The 25th chapter is on compassion and the next is on not eating meat. I have already quoted them. The succeeding titles are penance, on not nullifying penance, on not fraudulently possessing, on truth, on not giving way to anger, on not doing evil unto others, on not killing (which again have already been quoted in full), on the transience of life, on renouncing worldly things, on true knowledge, on overcoming desires, on fate—a truly comprehensive and vast and complete area covering all aspects of asceticism. Now let us look into some of the chapters and verses.

ON OVERCOMING DESIRES

1. Desire is the seed from which springs the cycle of lives and deaths for all times and for all men.
2. Further birthlessness is the only thing to be desired; to be free of a succession of further births, one has to desire desirelessness.
3. To achieve desirelessness is to achieve great wealth; even heaven could not endow you with such great wealth.
4. To be pure is to be desirelss; when truth is sought, desirelessness comes of itself.
5. Call only those who have conquered their desire, free men; others bound and enslaved by their own desires.
6. Desires result from delusions; to guard yourself from desiring anything is to be ascetically virtuous.
7. If one conquers one's tendency to yield to desires, one can achieve desirable eternity in the way one desires.
8. Suffering leads to suffering if one yields to desires; to have overcome desires is to have ceased to suffer.
9. Desire is the root cause of all suffering; if desire is done away with, the world will be joyful without intermission.
10. If one overcomes insatiable desires one arrives at heaven.

In commenting on the first verse Parimel Azhagar, the most well known and abstruse commentator on the *Kural* follows Jaina tradition closely, as Prof. Chakravarti points out; "Desires make the next life of the souls possible by being desirous, desire is referred to as the seed of *saṁsāra* in the Jaina doctrines. Henee for all men irrespective of their religion and for all times, whatever the dominant doctrine of the time. The equation of *mokṣa* with complete desirelessness is either Buddhist or Jainist; it is obvious that the poet of the *Kural* was certainly not a Buddhist; it has to be deduced that he was upholding the Jaina tradition of the only valid desire to be free from desires as the seed and root of salvation and freedom from a succession of births and deaths." That is the state of *mokṣa*.

Defining true knowledge or the knowledge of things that are true the poet explains the idea in ten *kurals* that are trenchant with the ascetic spirit of knowledge.

On True Knowledge

1. To believe in the unreal as the real is to lay the foundation of life after life.
2. How he achieves the right vision free of delusions, steps forth from darkness into light.
3. They who, free of doubts, achieve wisdom, are nearer heaven than earth.
4. Even if your five senses function well enough, they yield you nothing real, unless you have insight born of true knowledge.
5. Whatever the thing, whatever the kind of thing, to know it in its true nature, is knowledge.
6. He who has studied well and has arrived at knowledge free of doubts and delusions, has found the path of escape from life after life.
7. He who has arrived at truth by meditation of the true nature of thing, will not be subject to rebirths.
8. To be born is to wallow in many delusion; escape from this is to be achieved by knowing the red flower of truth.
9. If a man knows God as his refuge and if he so lives as to let all bondage fall away, he will escape the ruin that life works others.
10. The ills of life are cured if you root out lust, anger and delusion.

Here again in this chapter, the root cause of life after life and death after death, is delusion and false desires and hopes. Doing away with them in an ascetic manner is the only way you can cross the ocean of trouble that life is. In the phrase 'right vision', the poet seems to post the *samyag-darśana* of the Jainas posing it as preceding the right way or *mokṣa-mārga.* The doubts that, Tiruvalluvar says, can beset a man when setting out to achieve knowledge, are by Jaina concept 25 in number. Without any doubt the doubts of the second verse refer to the 25 kinds of blemishes that can dog truth though the number is not mentioned by the poet but only by the commentators from Parimel

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samyag-darśana-jñāna-cāritrāṇi mokṣa-mārgaḥ/
Umā-svāti, *Tattv-ārtha-sūtra*, I, 1.

Azhagar to Kavirāja Pandithar. That five senses bringing you perfect knowledge of things of a kind which only right insight can convert into right knowledge, is as much an original Jaina idea adopted by the later Indian, and Hindu systems. It finds expression frequently in later Jaina Tamil literature, especially in the epics in Tamil. The sixth *kural* of this chapter seems to hint at the Jaina belief that salvation and freedom from further birth is possible only to man, or human beings, because they are endowed with the possibility of acquiring true knowledge and setting out on the true path because of right knowledge.

The poet singles out the three vices, desire, anger and delusion as the last of the qualities a man could possibly rid himself of following a sentiment expressed early in Jaina doctrine about anger, lust and delusion, according to the commentator.

Perhaps the third amongst the full chapters of ten *kurals* I quote here, will be chapter 35 which talks of renunciation of worldly things. This is not to be mistaken with the "praise of renouncers' which formed the Jaina invocation, one of the four invocations, forming the third chapter of the book.

On Renouncing Worldly Things

1. The more things of the world a man renounces, the more free is he of the many griefs of this world.
2. The delights that renunciation brings are many; if you want to enjoy them fully, renounce worldly things early.
3. Conquer your five senses and renounce in a trice the seeming wealth of delights that your senses bring.
4. Possessions create grand delusions; the essence of renouncing is to be without possessions and consequent delusions.
5. If you want to be not born again into this world, even the body is redundant. Why then boast of other possessions.
6. One who detaches himself from all ideas of the *I* and *mine*, enters a heaven high above the abode of gods.
7. Pain and sorrow will not leave one who avoids not the hold of desires.
8. He who has renounced all, has truly redeemed himself; other men are ensured in the toils of the world.

9. The moment you forget your desires, you have put an end to your cycle of birts and deaths that every man is subject to.
10. Cling fast to him who has no desires; then may you destroy all desire.

The heaven above, the abode of gods seems to hint at the abode of Śiva, Viṣṇu and other, as Dr. Pope points out, and also pointing to a Jaina heaven, the abode of the Siddhas. Delusions are the veils to knowledge in the Jaina concept of knowledge; to get beyond the veils of delusion is or should be the attempt of man.

The fifth verse of this decade points out that a man's body is not his own; and from that denies that whatever possessions you have, are delusory—a really Jaina idea. The desireless is the God who is beyond derives, suggesting that the gods of the Hindus for instance are not beyond desires. The poet seems to hint at the doubt how gods who desire things would be able to help you in your desirelessness; he wants you to go the ultimate desireless One, *Vīta-rāga*.

I shall point out to three or four verses in chapter 27 on penance, hinting at their Jaina character and principle and conclude this section. The poet defines true penance as "putting up with all pain and doing no injury to any one", a truly noble Jaina concept.

Penance yields all that you desire in the manner you desire them; that is why penance should be undertaken. He says that penance, austerities, asceticism are but the duty of every man, surely a Jaina idea ugain, for no other faith made asceticism such a universal all-embracing principle. Penance which gives one mastery over oneself makes one worshipped by the world. Fame of this kind is excellent fame.

If you ask the poet why there are so many poor people among us today, he will reply that it is because many of them did not possess the ascetic virtues and did not do penance in their previous lives.

Identical views especially about asceticism of the sort that the poet of the *Kurul* advocates may be found in many systems, but a few of the words he uses, e.g. he asks you to acquire right knowledge to follow the right path tearing up the veils of

knowledge, seem to suggest overall Jaina practice and usage.

III

Ahiṁsā and asceticism are quite lofty and major principles, but equally important, though not as difficult of achievement or of honouring, is the more wordly practice of charity and feeding your guests. This, the Jaina doctrine, holds, as equally important, more for the social ordering and the implied sustenance of ascetics than as a metaphysical or even moral principle. Let us see how far the author of the *Tirukkural* subscribes to these ideas and how far his words and sentiments might be said to come from the Jaina tradition.

Charity and Feeding Your Guests

There are four whole chapters devoted to giving, to charity, and to begging and to not begging; the first two appear in the maxims dealing with the householder early in the general context, and the other two towards the end of the chapters on public life, rulers and the like. The Jaina ideas on giving and feeding guests and on begging and not begging are hedged with rules and regulations which partake of instructions as to the daily conduct of the householder, the ascetic, the needy and the others.

Some of the Jaina instructions and inhibitions are to be found in the *kurals* of Valluvar but again, charity and giving and begging are such vast subjects that Hindu, Christian, Islamic, and even other older and later scriptures have laid down their own rules and regulations about them.

It would be idle to consider Tiruvalluvar as being specifically Jaina in laying down the ground rules for charity and giving, but he approximates to it as much as he can, being even slightly ambiguous about indulging in begging and on admonishing his listeners not to beg. Unlike on *ahiṁsā* and on asceticism, it is not completely the Jaina idea that underlies the verses dealing with these things; they are more universally, than dogmatically, looked at from an economic and social point of view that might be recognized as Jaina, but still universal belonging to all religions and so completly secular as well.

Chapter (No. 7) on charity occurs early in the book:

1. The fulness of the householder is achieved when he feeds those who come hungry to him.
2. Even precious things like nectar, bestowing immortality, increase in value when shared with guests who wait on you. It is wrong not to share even your most precious things.
3. He who welcomes and duly entertains guests will never feel want or lose his wealth.
4. He who seeks good men or godly men as guests, will be prosperous always; the goddess of wealth will always smile on him.
5. He who shares whatever he has, with his guests, need not even till his lands; they will yield fruits of themselves.
6. Speeding the parting guest while waiting for the coming one, he himself will be a guest of the gods.
7. One cannot measure the true weight of charity; the weight differs according to the worth of your guest.
8. Even though one have husbanded all one's wealth, one will be supportless in the long run if one have not given a part of his wealth in charity.
9. Poverty should be defined as that stupidity which, even in the midst of plenty performs no acts of charity and welcomes no guests.
10. The *anicha* bloom withers when one smells it; one's guest will wither at an inhospitable look from you.

There are quite a number of items in this chapter in which we seem to detect a somewhat Jaina intonation. Chief among them, the worth of the guest and the wealth of giving being commensurate with the worth of the guest and not the giver as the Hindu *śāstras* often proclaim.

In this we seem to detect an allusion to three kinds of guests that might be fed; according to Jaina principles of these two

kinds are householders and the third, ascetic.* The householders are again of eleven kinds; the ascetics and the renouncers are called *munis*. The worth of the guest seems to suggest distantly at least the divisions between the guests that Jaina rules lay down. What worth of charity accrues to one will depend on what type of guest and how worthy of charity you get or promote.

In the sixth verse, the speeding guest and the coming guest seem again to indicate a Jaina attitude for the guests (for the ascetic is not to beg for food but should be fed) only those who are householders can offer of themselves, or invite of themselves, as guests. This division seems to be in the mind of the poet when he talks of the speeding and the coming guests.

Even if one gives little, if the little is given to a worthy guest, it will be considered not little but big, asserts the Jaina code. The *Kural* seems to have this distinction in mind in verse seven. Not to give in charity is equated with ignorance, in this case, ignorance of the right path.

Chapter 23 deals with giving. This chapter continues the idea of charity.

1. That alone can be called giving which gives to the poor; all other giving is in the nature of barter.
2. To receive is bad, even if it lead to heaven; and even if heaven is denied, to give is good.
3. He who is highborn gives without complaining of poverty and finds no end to his giving.
4. A man who asks for a thing is a disagreeable thing to see till his face lights up with the gift received.
5. Those who fast in penance endure hunger; to do away with hunger in others is better than fasting in penance.
6. He who earns spends his wealth well if he relieve the hunger of the needy.

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* *pātraṁ tri-bhedam-uktaṁ saṁyogo mokṣa-kāraṇa-guṇānām|*
avirata-samyag-dṛṣṭir virat-āviratas-ca sakala-viratas-ca||
Amṛta-candra, *Puruṣārtha-siddhy-upāya*, verse 171.
yatiḥ syād-uttamaṁ pātraṁ madhyamaṁ srāvak-ottamam|
su-dṛṣṭis-tad-viśiṣṭatvaṁ viśiṣṭa-guṇa-yogataḥ||
Āśādhara, *Sāgāra-dharm-āmṛta*, verse 44.

7. He who shares his food with the hungry will never himself go hungry at any time.
8. He who hoards his wealth, only to lose it, will never experience the joy of giving.
9. If a man eats alone, afraid that his store of food will decline if he share it with others, he is surely a beggar.
10. Death is joyless, but it is better to die than to refuse to give.

There might be nothing that can be pointed particularly as being Jaina, but in an earlier chapter dealing with Benevolence, the author of the *Kural* makes the proposition which today is known as Mahatma Gandhi's trusteeship idea of property and wealth which, along with Tiruvalluvar's ideas on giving might seem to point to a political economy as ideally practised in India by the Jainas, or at least sought to be practised, even if they did not wholly succeed in practising it. "Whatever has been produced by your own efforts is indeed for the use of the whole world", Tiruvalluvar says. And again, "the wealth of a man of true benevolence is like the water of the tank in the town, for the use of all". Again the poet compares the benevolent wealthy man as a fruit tree of whose fruits every one partakes. He compares him also to a medicinal plant which whoever uses benefits.

This great social and political economy is a gift of the Jainas to the world, only the world is all too imperfect and not steeped enough in morality to observe the wealth of the community as common wealth. The ideas of charity, feeding the guest etc. also come from the necessity of balancing a topsy turvy system of practical economy which, at its best, is immoral and at its worst is destructive.

With all this as background, let us go on to the two sequential chapters on begging and not begging which is the obverse of the coin of charity.

If to give is good and to receive is bad then who shall be the receivers in this world? The ambiguity, or dichotomy, is resolvable only when we accept the idea of guests that are worthy of receiving. Not all are to be considered worthy of receiving. Not all are to be considered worthy of receiving a gift. Need also might be worthy but needy alone is not to be the criterion of receiver of gifts.

Chapter 106 and 107 of the *Kural* present two contrasting pictures of begging one for, the other against. It looks like a sort of exercise, posing a riddle.

ON BEGGING

1. If those who can give, give not when the needy approach them, the fault is theirs, not of those that beg.
2. One can find pleasure even in begging, if one's begging causes no pain to another.
3. To ask of those who know how to be benevolent without pleading, can make even poverty or want pleasing.
4. Even the highborn when afflicted with poverty will give rise to illfame; poverty can lead certainly to lack of effort.
5. Many are the afflictions which follow in the wake of the affliction of poverty.
6. He who is a beggar, even if he chose well spoken words, will not be listened to.
7. Poverty which takes away the inclination to righteousness will make even one's mother look upon one as a stranger.
8. Were it not for the needy who are reduced to beg of others, the world will be filled with men of wealth with no charity.
9. If there were none to beg, how would the generous ones achieve glory in this world?
10. He who gets angry at having begged and not having been given, bears witness to the fact that beggary cannot be relieved even by anger.

Justifying beggary when it does not pain or harm anyone, seems to be Jaina in intent. The glory of giving cannot be practised, if there were no poor and needy in the world, argues the poet, perhaps replying to the socialist dream of doing away with poverty in the whole world. The moral grandeur of giving itself ensures the continuance of poverty in the world; if the poor and the meek have to inherit Heaven the poor and the meek have to be always with us.

Statistics of the nation's per capita income has nothing to do

with it; there will always be the needy and the poor, perhaps a consoling thought, for all time.

On Being Ashamed of Begging

1. It is better not to beg if you find not a munificent giver who does not grudge giving; not begging is a crore of times better than begging.
2. If the creator of the world had ordained that one should live only by begging, would it not have been better that he had perished before he created this world of men?
3. There is nothing more fallacious than to tell oneself that one can put an end to one's poverty by begging.
4. Great is the contentment of one who does not stoop to begging even when he is in great want; his greatness fills all space.
5. It might be only thin clear gruel but if it is earned by one's own toil, it will taste far better than the richest food.
6. The tongue of man cannot be worse employed than in begging even though it were begging only for water for a thirsty cow.
7. I shall only beg of those who beg that they do not beg of those who have no gift for giving.
8. The unreliable boat of begging will spring a leak on meeting the rock of refusal.
9. A man reduced to begging will be week of heart; he would always be ashamed and quite incapable of contemplating great things.
10. Where will he hide his head in shame, the man who is forced to beg by force of circumstances?

Though at first it might only look a sort of humanist dictum, does not the poet of the *Kural* sound ferocious when he demands that the creator of the world better die before he created the world which contained even one person reduced to live by begging to sustain his life. The strict interpretation of this *Kural* in this verse seems to give us the idea that the creator having done evil in creating the beggar should himself be forced to die. As an idea it is ferocious in the evaluation of the theory of

karman and fate to which even gods are not exempt, all things said and done.

In a later verse, the singling out of a cow in preference to other animals, seems to suggest a Jaina sort of contempt for Hindu beggars going about with cows as their badge of beggary. Could it be that there were many and more sacred cows coming in at the time of Valluvar?

IV

Among the other topics of a sort of overall ethical code for mankind, inspired if not always, or closely, by Jaina principles but only by distant, tenous links, a series of themes and topics occur in the *Kural* that are conducive to the good life.

Transience of Things, Equanimity, Love, Fear of Sinning

Among them are the observations on the transience of life which is expected to lead the ordinary but thinking man to renunciation and final salvation.

Chapter 34 deals with the transience of things:

1. Of all the ignorance that besets man is the worst that makes him think of most transient things as permanent.
2. Great riches crowd a man as crowds gather at a dance performance; when the dance is over the crowds depart.
3. All wealth is fleeting by its very nature; as soon as you get wealth, utilize it for doing things that are not fleeting.
4. A man's life is cut into days by the sharp knife of time; it is good when man realizes it that time is always against him.
5. To do the things that need to be done before your tongue becomes immobile and the last hiccup puts a stop to your breath, is good indeed.
6. What is the world's particular and unique fame? It consists in making us say, so and so was there yesterday and is there no more today.
7. As who will not be alive the next moment, is given to

thinking not a million things but a million million things.

8. The fledging bird flies the nest and discards it; this is but a symbol of the soul that flies the nest of body when the time comes.
9. Death is sleeping, and life but a waking from it.
10. Life has taken temporary shelter in your body; has it no other permanent abode?

The idea of time cutting the day and life into minutes, seconds, months, years etc. is a thought which is particularly effectively used by the Jaina moralists in the Tamil language. Nālidyār closely follows this *Kural* verse. As is the uniqueness of the world whose observation about a man being alive yesterday and today no more is also followed closely in other Jaina and other moralistic works.

The bird flying the nest as the life flies the body when the time comes, seems to be an oft used Jaina concept. In the ninth verse sleep and waking succeed each other in our lives quickly; in a similar manner life and death succeed each other in quick succession in the Jaina concept. Death follows life and life follows death in quick succession, as certain as day following night and night following day, unless something is done to bring to the fore the permanent and lasting things. If you have something righteous to do, do it today, do not postpone it to another day, says the poet in the context of righteousness.

Chapter 21 looks at the fear of sinning. Even the definition of sin as we find it in the *Kural* has to be identified with the fear of sin which Jaina identified, not the Christian or Hindu ideas of sin. It has something to do with *karman* and fate, and has sequence and consequence, and produces effects that are inexorable and inescapable. The form of the *Kural* makes the poet say many things in a small compass, as one of his early admirers put it, "He pipes the seven seas into a mustard seed".

1. To sin is to act pridefully; evil men are not afraid of sinning, while good men will always be.
2. Evil brings forth evil: evil is to be more feared than fire.
3. Not to do evil, even to one who does you evil is the hight of wisdom.
4. Work not evil to another even in forgetfulness; if you

do, the god of Righteousness will do you evil.

5. That one sinned out of poverty is no excuse; evil acts and sins only make one all the poorer.
6. He who does injury to others will suffer and be saddened.
7. One can survive the enmity of everything; but the enmity created by your sins is something difficult to survive.
8. Evil is like the shadow of a man; it will follow him for ever and work him evil at the end.
9. If you have any love for yourself, sin not; sins will destroy you.
10. He who is free of sin and does no evil to others is safe from destruction in this, as well as in the other, life.

The pride of sinning looks almost like a Christian metaphor. But the pride which Valluvar refers to seems to be the pride of ignorance, of having done no sin before, and in that pride, sinning without knowledge. Those who have sinned and suffered might also be proud that having sinned and enjoyed the painful fruits, they will not sin any more. Sins can arise thus out of knowledge as well as ignorance as Jaina texts are fond of pointing out. Sin is the most potent enemy of whoever sins; but it does him and him only harm. If you have any self love, do not sin.

Let us look at the chapter on equanimity which is 63rd in its place in the text.

1. When troubles stare you in the face, laugh at them; it will help you to win victory over your troubles.
2. A sea of troubles will disappear if a man of right knowledge thinks rightly on them.
3. He who is not troubled by the onset of troubles will trouble his troubles away.
4. Obstacles are obstructed and overcome by the man who like a bullock on uncharted paths pushes ahead.
5. A man who is not troubled at heart by obstacles in his way is really an obstacle against obstacles.
6. He who is free of elation at the time of prosperity will

not be put down in mind when adversity overtakes him.

7. The human body is born for troubles; the noble-hearted do not mind obstacles or misfortunes.
8. He who seeks not joys, will not savour ills; he will consider troubles natural to this life.
9. He who seeks not joy in pleasures will not be sorrowful in sorrows.
10. He who has cultivated his inner resources and feels pleasure in pain, him will even his enemies consider noble.

Though these *kurals* under the heading 'on equanimity' are included in a chapter which falls within the section on rulers and kings, it is obvious that what is true of rulers and kings in time of adversity is true of the commoners as well. The way that the poet wants man to overcome any kind of suffering material physical or other, by overcoming the spirit of suffering and relating it to an inner nobility is very heartening and makes the moderns, for instance, hail the *Kural* as one of the yeasaying, positive, exhortation to constructive thought, available to the Indian.

There are one or two other chapters which as well as any other things in the *Kural* clinch our sense of Jaina impact on the author and his familiarity with Jaina thought and principles to become more or less certain of it in an objective spirit.

I shall give the chapter on love, or loving kindness, with brief comment. It is Chapter 8, and so occurs fairly early in the book in the section devoted to day to day life of the householder.

1. Can love be kept out by doors and bolts? Distress of a dear friend will bring tears to the eyes of him who loves him.
2. The loveless have all things they have to themselves. Those who love, sacrifice even the bones of their bodies for those whom they love.
3. The link which sustains the soul to the body of bones, is love.
4. Love it is that begets desire. And desire begets in true the excellent endless excellences of friendship.

5. If one have joy in present life, it is only the result of loving kindness in the previous life.
6. Loving kindness is a firm ally of virtues, they say. It is a strong defence against evil.
7. The sun burns up boneless worms. So does righteousness burn up those who have no loving kindness in them.
8. A life without love is useless like a withered tree in a barren field.
9. All outward ornaments are unnecessary for a man adorned with the inner jewel of loving kindness.
10. Only that man lives who has love in his heart; others are mere skin-clothing bone.

The author is not here talking of the love of man for woman which he is to deal with in some detail in the third book of the *Kural* entitled, *Kamathuppāl*, book of Love or Desire. He is here talking of something more universal in the sense of love obtaining between fellow human beings not only friends and close relations or the circle that you know.

The love, or loving kindness, that the poet of the *Kural* expresses is a sort of reverence and love for all living things, such as is advocated by Jaina ways of life. We can detect a few latent dimensions of Jainism in these verses Even in the very first verse the poet observes that love tarries not at bolted doors and obstacles in the way; it sets out to relieve a friend in distress.

The sixth verse can be interpreted also by saying that love is the friend of virtue, it can also be the friend of evil or vices. But this would require a somewhat twisted justification, and so one prefers the opposite, saying that it is love that precludes evil. Certainly love of one's own salvation, of being friendly and loving to oneself prevents one from working harm to that prospect, and so one refrains from working evil, out of love.

The seventh verse does subscribe wholly to the Jaina idea and principle of loving things from the primary to the evolved state. This phrase echoes down the corridors of Jaina writings in Tamil; lack of love working havoc on righteousness.

In the last verse, the poet clearly advocates the *ahiṁsā-dharma* and only that for achieving salvation. Life follows

loving kindness. Make love to all and your salvation is sure, seems to be the ulterior sense of this verse. By saying that only that man lives who has love in his heart, the poet according to Tamil commentators implies that the life and its purpose, its moral grandeur and its ultimate perfection as life as well as salvation is achieved only by being kind to all living beings. Otherwise, man is but a skin covering a set of bones incapable of the moral grandeur of living, achieving the final and desirable goal of all living.

Surely a thoroughly Jaina concept, if we grant the reverence for life, love for all living beings, and harming nothing living, as the major Jaina precept that the religion had taught its followers.

It cannot be too often emphasized that Tiruvalluvar was not creating or trying to create a metaphysical system or laying down larger principles for achieving salvation in a religious sense. He was interested in writing or composing a secular text book of moral conduct, a code by which men could live in a world which consisted of both evil aud of good of truth and untruth, Jainas and non-Jainas. Though it might, at this stage after all that has preceded, be asserted that he was a Jaina in outlook and by training and above all by conviction he wanted his disciples or students to read him or listen to him and follow him to achieve fame in a wide, various and certainly somewhat inimical to morality world that obtained then as now.

He lays down moral codes without auy dogmatic principles but with a certain hand, for he does not allow an obvious dichotomy to worry him or his readers. This is the best of things to do, don't you have any uncertainties about it, he seems to say at every turn. His doubts, even when they occur, are removed; he would like to remove the doubts and uncertainties of those who would follow his book to the letter.

He is certain that to win a hearing and a following from the worldly men surrounding him, there are quite a few qualities that are necessary, like sharing your wealth, being untroubled of spirit in times of trouble, of being truthful, of being compassionate towards all, and of being proud but not vain of what you make, fully sure of its transience and willing to give away etc. etc. All this along with your treatment of those who come to you needy and go away satisfied are enough, but it is a long list,

though near complete, that would lead you on the path of fame.

V

The achievement of fame and the how and the why of it are the concern of the poet in the ten verses which belong to the 24th chapter.

FAME

1. He who gives ungrudgingly, earns praise of men; there can be no creater music to the ears of men than praise born of giving.
2. All men praise a giver; and there are no better words in the world than praise of a giver.
3. Nothing in the world is comparable to fame; fame is undying.
4. If your fame extends to the limits to the earth, then gods will stop praising gods and begin praising you.
5. Only rare souls add worldly ruin to fame and die in glory.
6. Live with fame; if you cannot, it is better to die.
7. He who lives without fame, should rather blame himself than the others who do not praise him.
8. He who has not achieved fame by his giving, will be considered a disgraceful fellow by all.
9. The earth which bears the weight of fameless men will yield no fruits,
10. Those who lead blameless lives are those who live; those who live without fame are the non-living.

In claiming that giving is the only basis of fame, the author of the *Kural* seems to subscribe to the Jaina idea of the householder and trader giving to the ascetic and the worthy needy guests. Was a poet like Tiruvalluvar in his age and in his community unaware of learning, wealth, heroism as bestowers of worldly fame? His singling out giving as the only begetter of fame is intrinsic to Jainism and this chapter, if none other in the whole book, gives proof of the intrinsic character of Jainism subscribed to by the author.

There are secular works of the period which praise heroism in great style; even they prescribe as in *Purananuru* for instance giving heroism as a basis, an enduring producer of fame. Obviously the poets who sang in praise of giving were the receivers in almost all cases. But the author of the *Kural* makes giving an abstract moral good, one in which he is not personally involved.

Giving was advocated by many religions, but the mendicant and the householder supporting each other was a Jaina speciality, as can be readily and easily recognized.

There can be listed other chapters, other ideas, both in the abstract and in the concrete, which give us a picture of the author of the *Kural* as a Jaina. Some of it can be only dimly seen in a few places; in a few places the bright light of Jaina thought illuminates whole passage.

But the main argument of my thesis would be that because of his insistence on *ahiṁsā* of doing no hurt to any living being, and because of his attitudes of a humanistic kind to truth, and because of his whole moral code just as well because of his insistence on sequential cause and effect relationship of *karman*, and because of his faith in fate which however you can defeat by right action and right knowledge, and because of many other things you find in the *Kural*, it might be commentatively expected to have established that the author is a Jaina author, a practising Jaina one, well-versed in the principles and doctrines of Jainism but here not interested in expounding them as much as in applying them to the lives of householders and traders, the wealthy and the poor, the ascetic and the ruler, the worldly and the not so worldly, the religious as well as the secular man.

Without overdoing his Jainism, the author is able to emphasize the Jaina principles which lead to moral endeavour, fame in the present life, wealth on earth and a place in heaven hereafter. What more do you want, he asks definitely an unanswerable question, whether you are Jaina or not.

CHAPTER VII

On Wealth and Its Uses

The Jaina way of life lays a lot of emphasis on asceticism as it is well known to all and sundry, but it also does not prohibit the pursuit of worldly things in a righteous and proper manner, and the enjoyment of them in the right spirit, without infringing the laws of morality as laid down by its scriptures. In this the Jaina differ substantially from the Hindu or Buddhist principles about worldliness and enjoyment of material prosperity and mundane joys.

Even avoiding the extreme position of a Śaṅkara-vedānta which castigates everything material, worldly and tangible as more or less illusory, the Hindus had developed a guilt consciousness (if they had any guilt consciousness at all) about prospering in the mundane material world and achieving affluence. The Brahmins preferred a life of begging, *bhikṣā*, though they begged with autocratic authority as it were, and often extorted their alms.

The Buddhists were, more or less, obsessed with the transitoriness of worldly life, its delusory characteristics and with the metaphysical aspects of achieving a nullity that was expected to be universal, they asked for what they wanted.

I

The Jainas while they insisted on renouncing as the ultimate step to human salvation did not object to amassing within limits worldly possessions, following in self limited affluence and even speaking wealth as a way helping renunciation at the end on the principle, 'the more you give up, the more you merit'. And the Jaina mendicant could not even ask for his food. This is not often emphasized or given due weightage to, in our considera-

tions of Jaina doctrine; and the *Kural* was as much a guide to the moral life, as to success in the worldly life and mundane affairs and organized even amassing wealth by following the right ways.

This is what makes it a unique text book of a secular kind which comes handy in a world full of *Dale Carnegies, Billy Grahams, Norman Vincent Peals* and others, purged of their advertising, demogogic or otherwise screaming modern virtues. This is again what makes the *Kural* a most modern book, when we take into consideration its appeal to the modern man as a universal hand book towards human practical morality.

Tiruvalluvar has devoted qaite a few of his 108 chapters in the first two books to the righteous making of wealth, the enjoyment of it, the sharing of it with others, and not only the ascetics, and to the ways of the world. This way of looking at wealth and worldly affluence and material things on which modern man prides himself as he advances into the modern age of science and technology, was a part of the principle of living advocated by the ancient Jainas who looked at the world in a worldly, instead of an otherworldly, way except in the case of ascetics.

There might seem to be a dichotomy here in the division between the socalled spirituality and socalled warldliness but the dichotomy is more illusory than most other worldly things are claimed to be. The Jainas prospered in their trade and commerce and mercantile affairs; they built powerful empires, gave rise to major and minor epics and master-pieces lifting local dialects to literary status, and, were friends of kings with effectiveness and survived in a generally hostile world by being pragmatically worldly views into operation and at the same time observing a great and almost divine moral code.

I have already quoted a few of the sayings of the author of the *Kural* on wealth as occasion offered in the previous sections. But in this section I shall give a few of the chapters dealing with wealth and poverty and worldliness and prosperity in their entirety so that we can get the context in full and interpret the verses in the words of the poet himself, as commentary, more than straight translation, distorts more often than not what the poet strove to say.

II

I shall take the chapter on Poverty which occurs towards the end of the second book of the *Kural.* It is chapter 105.

1. What is worse than having nothing? Nothing can be worse than having nothing.
2. Where there is the great foe of poverty, there all joy is destroyed.
3. Avarice born of poverty kills both high birth and kind speech.
4. Even men of noble birth will utter all kinds of evil words and do many evil acts under the influence of killing poverty.
5. The single ill of poverty is the source of many ills.
6. The words of one stricken by poverty, even when full of wisdom, will carry no weight with any one.
7. Even his mother will look at her son as a stranger if he were poor.
8. Is poverty which killed me utterly yesterday, to dog me today also?
9. One can manage to sleep in the heart of fire but one who is poor cannot sleep even in his own bed at night.
10. If he who is poor renounce not the world, he becomes a burden to those who have rice and gruel.

The moral is obvious. Poverty is portrayed as the foe of man. The author of the *Kural*, along with Shakespeare's Iago, wants you to put money into your purse. The single ill of poverty is the source of many of your ills, it is certainly no exaggeration in worldly terms. And when the poet cries out that the poverty that dogged me yesterday is it to dog me today also, we realise that here is a personal statement of great poignancy, if ever Tiruvalluvar did pen that verse. But poverty is only a negative aspect of worldly material living. Let us give a glance at the positive aspect that of wealth and the acts undertaken for producing and for enjoying it.

III

The poet comes to deal with wealth and the production of it under various sections and chapters in his book. In one sense

the book is a book about wealth but wealth acquised under moral human conditions, of health giving moral propensities.

Chapter 76 as we have the text of the *Kural* in one version gives us ten well thought out *kurals* on the production of wealth. I give the chapter below in its entirety, again as it gives us an idea of what the poet had to say about the most worldly and material thing called the production of wealth, we think of as a new value which the modern age has newly acquired.

We realise with a start that here is a poet and a neglected way of life, namely the Jaina one, which was as modern as modern attitude can be and as pragmatic and as practical as we might desire all worldliness to be. We feel ashamed of having been neglectful of this side of common life all this while for want of proper guidance in the matter. The poet is simple and straight-forward; no commentaries or dilusions by a number of words is necessary at all to understand and place his thought in the Jaina moral and solid system.

1. There is nothing that can make a man of worth, more worthy than his capacity to produce more wealth.
2. He who has not, will be treated with contempt by every one; he who has, will be respected by all.
3. Wealth is an unfailing lamp, reaching wherever it wants to go, dispelling darkness and overcoming all enmity.
4. Wealth accumulated by proper methods without foul practices is productive of joy and virtue.
5. Wealth that is accumulated without love or compassion, had better be given up.
6. The wealth he inherits, the wealth he produces, the wealth he collects from others (subjects in the case of) and the wealth of vanguished enemies, accrues to the king of the land.
7. Grace is nursed by its foster mother, wealth; without wealth there can be no winning of grace.
8. He who undertakes to do a thing with ready wealth to his hand is like a privileged person witnessing an elephant fight from a hill top.
9. Produce wealth; wealth is sharp as steel and can put down the pride of your enemies. There is nothing sharper than wealth.

10. He who has acquired wealth, acquires automatically as it were the other virtues of living, good living and happiness.

I might have quoted this chapter in full in another context but it does deserve its place in this explanation of the attitude of Jainas to material welfare and worldly affluence and wealth. It is plainly addressed to rulers but it will hold in part for affairs as well. He does not quote authorities or wise men but draws from an experience of poverty and riches, not perhaps personal. It is all simply expressed in somewhat moralistic terms, a strictly Jaina habit.

Somewhat allied to the statement of the poet concerning the production of wealth are the ten verses contained in an earlier chapter (29) on not fraudulently possessing. Again the verses speak for themselves more clearly than any comment of mine can. Valluvar was a poet who at no time needs an intermediary of any sort though many have set up as his intermediaries more often for their own satisfaction and self-glorification than in praising the poet, though the poet himself does not emphatically need them.

1. If one want to avoid the censure of the world, one should avoid fraudulent possessions.
2. If you covet another's possessions, even in your thoughts, you become evil.
3. Though fraudulent possessions lead seemingly to an increase of one's wealth, they will ultimately bring ruin to one.
4. If one cultivates love of fraudulent possessions and steals, though at first it might be somewhat pleasing, it will lead definitely to ruin later.
5. One who watches out for the other man's carelessness in order to possess himself of his property, shows that one has no compassion in one's heart.
6. One who waits eagerly to defraud another, can never walk the straight path of virtue.
7. One who cultivates knowledge of the world and its ways, cannot cultivate meanness which fraud and theiving imply.

8. Righteousness dwells in the heart of the righteous one; the fraudulent are filled with deceit.
9. One who knows nothing else but fraud, will be finished quickly.
10. The fraudulent one cannot be straight, even of body. The world of the gods will not fail one who is straight.

Simple warnings against fraudulent means of acquiring wealth, have a sort of moral sanction of righteousness in life in the mundane world. Straight and crooked are played one against each other as he warns in this chapter. Similar in its import is the chapter, much earlier in the *Kural*, entitled on not coveting (chapter 18). This again deserves to be quoted in full in the context of wealth and the production of it.

1. If you covet another's wealth unjustly, your kin will fare ill, and you yourself incur great guilt.
2. However immense the gains accruing from it, the just man will be ashamed of losing his balance because of greed.
3. He who pursues low pleasures will forfeit his legitimate joy in life.
4. Even if he become wholly destitute he who has conquered his senses, will not covet another's possessions.
5. A subtle mind, intellectuality, cleverness, matter little if you be greedy and commit unjust deeds.
6. Greed, even if it were for God's grace, should not lead you to covetous ways.
7. Covetousness, even if it bring many fruits, will make them turn bitter on the tongue.
8. Not to covet another's wealth is the one indestructible wealth that one can cultivate.
9. Prosperity chooses to dwell with one who is just and covets not.
10. Thoughtless greed will bring disaster; non-desire will bring victory to any one.

IV

What does one do with the wealth produced by righteous means, by legitimately earned wealth come by virtuous ways

without covering another's property and striving for no fraudulent possessions. In three, or more, chapters scattered in the *Kural* the poet gives expression to what the wealthy one should do with his wealth.

Here again, one observes a sort of Jaina-inspired practicality and pragmatism which would have come imperfectly to man of any other religious persuasion proving that by conviction and perhaps also by birth, Tiruvalluvar was a Jaina. The first of the chapters I shall quote in this context is on charity and is placed in the ninth place in the list of contents. I have quoted this chapter in another context, but it will be a repetition here as well.

1. The fulness of the life of the householder is achieved when he feeds those who come hungry to him.
2. Even precious things like nectar, bestowing immorality, increase in value when shared with guests who wait on you. It is wrong not to share even your precious things.
3. He who welcomes and duly entertains guests, will never feel want or lose his wealth.
4. He who seeks good men, or godly men, as guests, will be prosperous always; the goddess of wealth will always smile on him.
5. He who shares whatever he has, with his guests, need not even till his lands; they will yield fruits of themselves.
6. Speeding the parting guest, while waiting for the coming one he himself will be a guest of the gods.
7. One cannot measure the true weight of charity; the weight differs according to the worth of your guest.
8. Even though one have husbanded all one's wealth, one will be supportless in the long run if one have not given a part of his wealth in charity.
9. Poverty should be defined as that stupidity which, even in the midst of plenty performs no acts of charity and welcomes no guests.
10. The *anicha* bloom withers when one smells it; one's guest will wither at an inhospitable look from you.

Giving in charity is perhaps one of the commonest of moral advocacies under any religious system; the Hindu, the Buddhist,

the Christian and the Islamic along with the Jainas prescribe it as one of the right ways of conduct.

There is no surprise in Valluvar advocating it from his own point of view, but he has further views on wealth and its uses which do not vitiate his advocating simple acts of charity, as he does in this chapter. In a further chapter (23), on giving, the poet Valluvar expatiates further and in more depth as it were, on aspects of giving and charity which take us further into the Jaina moral law or *dharma*, or as the doctrine calls it the right path.

1. That alone can be called giving which gives to the poor; all other giving is in the nature of barter.
2. To receive is bad, even if it lead to heaven; and even if heaven is denied, to give is good.
3. He who is highborn gives without complaining of poverty and can find no end to his giving.
4. A man who asks for a thing is a disagreeable thing to see till his face lights up with the gift received.
5. Those who fast in penance endure hunger; to do away with hunger in others is better than fasting in penance.
6. He who earns, spends his wealth well if he relieve the hunger of the needy.
7. He who shares his food with the hungry, will never go hungry at any time.
8. He who hoards his wealth, only to lose it, will never experience the joy of giving.
9. If a man eats alone, afraid that his store of food will decline if he share it with others, is surely a beggar.
10. Death is joyless, but it is better to die than to refuse to give.

Tiruvalluvar recurs to the theme of giving in charity and sharing one's wealth with the needy in a much later chapter (101) entitled Wealth That is Useless For Self or Others. Here is the translation of the ten verses.

1. He who, without enjoying his wealth, hoards it up, will be considered dead even while living.
2. He who knows that wealth brings joy, but, having it, enjoys not, will be born a ghost in his next life.

3. He who assesses wealth, but not the fame that wealth can bring as a giver in charity, is a dead weight in the world.
4 He who has not earned the gratitude of another, when his life's account is cast, what balance would it show?
5. Even if he possessed crores, if he does not enjoy them or give to others with grace, it is as if he really possessed nothing at all.
6. He who neither himself enjoys nor makes others enjoy his wealth, is diseased, not healthy.
7. He who has but does not relieve those who have not, his riches can be equated to an old spinster who has grown old by hereself, her youth enjoyed by none.
8. The wealth of a man who has no benevolence in him is like a poison tree in the town, its fruits can be of no use to any one.
9. The wealth accumulated by a man who does not enjoy it or gives of it to others voluntarily, or helps others, that wealth will eventually be taken by others forcibly and enjoyed by them.
10. The poverty of a generous man will necessarily be brief; it will be like the temporary dryness of a usually rain-laden field on earth.

The paean to giving and sharing one's wealth might be singled out as belonging to all religious, and one item that informs the spirit of the earliest stage of Tamil poetry, the Tamil *Saṅgam* poems, which along with love and heroism lifted the praise of charity to great heights. It was mainly of charity to poets that they sang, the givers being the chieftains of the land and the receivers the bards roaming the land.

Tiruvalluvar, the poet of the *Kural*, exalted the charity directed to the needy and the hungry of the world not only to Jaina ascetics but to other commoners as well. It was a logical extension of ideas of worldly wealth in the moral world of Jainism and largely accepted Jaina ideas. There seems no gainsaying this in the context of the three chapters on giving quoted here. His ideas on making wealth and the sharing of it with others should certainly proclaim the truth of Tiruvalluvar's Jainism,

V

I cannot do better than conclude this chapter in its last section taking a glance at the chapters on the tillers of the soil, which the poet comes to towards the end of his book, in his 104th chapter. The tillers of the soil were the Vaiśyas of the land who later were to turn to trade and commerce and produce the heroes of the ten Jaina Tamil major and minor epics.

Wealth and economy depend on the tillers of the soil which truth Valluvar brings home to his readers in no uncertain terms. The chapter of ten verses, entire with no comment except the barest of my own, is necessary for truth to tell, no one could speak with more emphasis, clarity and brevity, than the poet of the *Kural* in Tamil could. It might be considered tedious of me to repeat this sentiment often, but I want to drive the point home that in dealing with a poet like Tiruvalluvar, we have no room for misconceptions at all, except those born of regional religious and other social chauvinisms of a crude kind indulged in by most interpretations and commentaries. There has been enough of that about this must succinct and emphatic and clearheaded of poets.

1. However the world might whirl, it has to follow the path of the plough; tilling the soil is the noblest of human occupations.
2. Tillers of the soil are the axle-pins of the world. Those who have not the strength to follow the plough, follow other pursuits. But all other pursuits in the world are supported by the tilling of the soil.
3. Those who till the earth are those who really live; others simply follow them for their food.
4. Those who grow grains for food are those under whose spread umbrella stands the king whose umbrella protects the world.
5. Those who toil in the fields with their hands will never have to beg; they will ever be in a position to give food to those who beg for food.
6. Even those who have renounced the desires of the world will suffer, if the tillers of the soil decide to sit in idleness.

7. A tiller who lets his land dry to a fourth of its weight will make it yield more, even without manuring it.
8. The tilling of the land is important; more important is the right type of manuring; more important still is the timely watering; and most important of all is it to guard the crop.
9. If the owner of the land stays away without attending to it, it will behave like a sulking wife to yield nothing.
10. The earth like a maid will laugh at those who plead poverty and work not at tilling her.

The whole chapter, while important in the context of wealth and tilling as a means of producing it, acquires a special importance, if we concede that apart from the ideas and the importance attached to the tillers of the soil, the poet seems to have pleasure in talking of the earth, as a maid, and as an unfruitful woman, if neglected, which might argue an insight into his calling as a tiller of the soil, to which not merely theoretically, but practically he attributed great importance.

There is nothing irreconcilable with Tiruvalluvar being a tiller of the soil while he was also a Jaina who knew how to make use the wealth he produced on the earth. This praise of the tiller of the soil is wholly Jaina in import.

More than any other evidence we might have for considering Valluvar, the poet, as a practising Jaina of his times, his attitude towards wealth and its uses, as well as its source from the land, might suggest incontrovertibly, that he was a Jaina.

CHAPTER VIII

The Kural on Truth and Knowledge

I

The strategy of the poet in composing a uniquely singular, out of the way code of conduct, based on a moral order of the universe consisted of avoiding on the whole the familiar terminology of all religions, the abstract ideas of vogue metaphysics, but to concentrate on the daily practice with the emphasis on: the conduct of man in his everyday dealings with others; giving and participating; making wealth and sharing it with the worthy and the needy; ordering his household affairs with the good wife at the centre of things; making provisions for educating his young in the right path, on the right lines; to see things in the right way; the emphasis on 'right' is a Jaina trend more than in other religions or ways of living, and the poet himself does not overemphasize the right way, more than just necessary.

Tiruvalluvar might not take credit for being a philosopher, he makes no attempt to build up a system of thought self-sufficient in itself, rounded up for all purposes, consistently offering this or that or the other kind of salvation to his followers. He is giving only most practical advice, thinking nothing unimportant in the day to day life of the common garden variety of man, whether it was about eating no meat, whether it was concerned with no alcoholic or intoxicating drinks, whether it was concerned with not gambling or avoiding lustful pursuit of women other than his wife etc.

He was putting his gifts of expression to use to bring usual order to the lives of men round him in a particular way, so that they could make the most of their lives, in the most practical way they could, proud of belonging to a moral order of things which was not at variance with human nature and with

the greatest amount of righteousness as content in the acts of commission and omission that man is called upon to perform in the daily discharge of his duties.

Tiruvalluvar does not insist on caste or community *dharma*, as Hindu law-givers and moralists of the time insisted on doing. His is a casteless society, though it might not have existed in the reality as he found it round him; he ignores caste but achieves it by penance and sacrifices, by the acts of benevolence and the compassion and understanding of the good effects of certain moral actions.

Tiruvalluvar was not interested, it is obvious, at least in this book, in the salvation of man, either by merging with a universal soul according to the Hindus belonging to certain sects or to the soul attracted to the large Oversoul according to other sects, or in the final annihilation of things, as the Buddhists warranted, when man attained salvation. His is definitely not a metaphysical or spiritual or philosophical concern for the purpose of living, only for the noble moral aims of ordinary social lives.

He finds the day to day life of his fellow human beings sufficient unto itself. He finds a moral purpose: in bringing forth good and well mannered and well instructed and well trained off-spring; in having a good wife at home; in being sufficiently learned to stand up in learned assemblies; in making wealth by honest trade or by other methods that do not depart from integrity; in using that wealth for bettering and feeding the poor and needy and fulfilling the bare necessities of those that do not have; and in supporting the order of ascetics on which the spiritual wisdom of the world depends, their wisdom being the scripture of the world.

Both in his assertion of the importance of the ascetic as a class and of the householder as a moral entity, Tiruvalluvar was voicing a most obvious Jaina obsession with morality and concretized life and experiences not exactly in the abstract but in its daily practices and observances.

It is perhaps in his attitude to truth in the abstract when he talks of it that his humanistic obsessions, if we can call them that, come to the fore. In dealing with truth he does not visualize grandiose or impressively great abstractions or take doctrinaire or metaphysical positions or give voice to dogmas but

only deals with a downtoearth attitude of the common garden variety of commen sense. He outlines what he calls truth.

II

The ten maxims that Valluvar gives us under the title, Truth, occur as the 30th chapter in the book as we have it today and will bear pondering on from a wholly humanistic point of view, though as metaphysical or spiritual statements they might strike one as wholly elementary and even inadequate. The inadequacy is felt to be sure, by the poet himself for he scatters his varied definitions of truth or many facets of it, throughout his whole book.

Truth in Tiruvalluvar is a wholly humanist adjunct making his moral life possible, not just an abstraction or a value in itself: it is a value only in so far as it makes the better life of man under this worldly circumstances possible.

1. What is truth? Truth is that which does not harm any one.
2. Even a lie takes on the garb of truth, if it bring good to others.
3. One should not utter what one knows to be falsehood; if one does, one's own heart will blame one constantly.
4. He who knowingly never utters a falsehood will be for-ever in the hearts of men.
5. Even better than he who does penance truly, better even than a man with true compassion is he who tells the truth as he knows it.
6. Nothing on earth is as glorious as truthfulness; it brings, in its wake, all other virtues.
7. If one lives according to the truth without any false-hood, one need not indulge in other acts of piety.
8. To be clean of body one bathes in water; to be clean of mind, one tells the truth.
9. Lamps light only a short way ahead; truth sheds its light all the way throughout one's life.
10. In my search for the good in all the scriptures of the world, I have come across nothing so good as truth.

The attempt at concretizing such an obstract thing as truth is evident in all the ten verses; he, the poet, does not allow truth as an idea to get unmanageably out of hand. It is likened to a lamp and contrasted with lamps which only light a part of your way, while the lamp of truth can light up the whole of your way through life.

Other acts of piety are quite unnecessary while you are truthful and do not seek refuge in any falsehood, always with the proviso that your truth does no harm to any one on earth. One bathes in water to make the body clean, the truth is a Gaṅgā which washes away not your sins but your uncleanness of mind. The poet finally, in the concluding verse, confesses that he searched in all the learned scriptures of the world to finally arrive at the greatest good, the truth.

It is a wholly moral position to take and suggests the morality of the Jainas rather than the spirituality of the Hindus, whatever it might be and the metaphysicality of the Buddhists.

It again controverts, to a certain degree, the individuality of the Christian principles in which the preserving of the individual in all his attitudes and consciousnesses persist till doomsday.

The only body of doctrine that comes near the moral position of Tiruvlluvar with regard to truth and truthfulness in practice eschewing falsehoods in the Jaina one, if we take into consideration the world of the poet and the times he lived in.

This might be a sort of negative proof but nevertheless it is proof indeed of the Jaina ambience in which the whole work of *Tirukkural* by Tiruvalluvar is steeped.

III

I shall not try to assemble here what all other things the poet has said about truth wherever he might have said it, it does not contradict in any way the ten verses in the chapter on truth but go on to deal with the idea of knowledge, a larger entity practically, in the *Kural* that the poet has given voice to.

We can build up a theory of knowledge and learning and education from the *Kural* but it is not knowledge of the kind that binds you to a moral spiritual life. It is not knowledge that gives you that might be called spiritual salvation; it is

knowledge that gives you the wherewithal to live the full moral life according to accepted moral principles laid down in the *Kural* by the author. Knowledge is of no use unless as a guide to action here and now in your daily life.

This insistence on practicality in a world beset with shares for the morally inclined man, would help us in our argument that the moral grandeur of the poet Valluvar belongs to the Jaina order rather than to other orders among the Indian systems of thought prevailing in his day.

Tiruvalluvar devotes a whole chapter (36) to True Knowledge in his first book on day to day life. In the second book on public living he devotes two early chapters, 40 and 41, one each to learning and to not learning; the chapter 42 is devoted to learning by listening and 43 to knowlege and chapter 44 deals with knowing one's own faults.

Further chapters deal with knowing one's strength, on knowing the proper time, on knowing the right place, on knowing what one is doing etc., especially in the case of rulers of a country, some of which might be pertinent with regard to ordinary folk as well though addressed to rulers. Further chapters again deal with knowing things without being told, on knowing the nature of the assembly one is addressing, on knowing your friends and enemies, on not being sufficiently wise, etc. both in the context of public and private individuals.

We can build up a whole theory of education and learning out of what the poet of the *Kural* says, but that might be not within the scope of this monograph.

I shall here content myself by pointing out the moral implications of such knowledge as you acquire and try to relate that knowledge to the moral background of Jaina ideals and the moral Utopia of the Jainas, that being the limited purpose of this exercise.

A wise man of Greece, Socrates, summed up knowledge as "knowing that you do not know is knowledge". On the strength of that knowledge, he was once called the wisest man in Athens of his time. But the author of the *Kural* does not offer such a negative concept of knowledge.

He says that wherever you hear wise things, absorb them; it does not matter who, from whatever station low or high, says it; if it is wise, absorb it, and make it your own. Knowledge is to

be valued from whomsoever it comes, in whatsoever garb, seeing that we are not likely to know all things under the sun.

Knowledge consists of knowing anything in its true nature, a decidedly Jaina attitude with regard to knowledge. And to let yourself be misguided by false knowledge is the height of folly. But let us begin with the chapter of ten verses on true knowledge, a repetition, however.

1. To believe in the unreal as the real is to lay the foundation of life after life.
2. He who achieves the right vision free of delusions, steps forth from darkness into light.
3. They who, free of doubts, achieve wisdom, are nearer heaven than earth.
4. Even if all your five senses function well enough, they yield you nothing, unless you have insight born of true knowledge.
5. Whatever the thing, whatever the kind of thing, to know it in its true nature, is knowledge.
6. He who has studied well and has arrived at knowledge free of doubts and delusions, has found the path of escape from life after life.
7. He who has arrived at truth by meditation of the true nature of things, will not be subject to rebirth.
8. To be born is to wallow in many delusions; escape from this is to be achieved by knowing the red flower of truth.
9. If a man knows the God as his refuge and if he so lives as to let all bondage fall away, he will escape the ruin that life works on others.
10. The ills of life are cured, if you root out lust, anger and delusion.

In delineating the purpose of true knowledge as freeing one from delusions and from the cycle of one birth after another, the poet seems to accept the Jaina definition of knowledge as amounting to that. In no other discipline do we have these and only these purposes, to knowledge. Lust, anger and delusion grouped together in the last verse seem to suggest the moral position that delusion itself, like anger and lust, is productive of immoralities.

The red flower of truth seems to be a paraphrase of a Jaina term in the service of knowledge; other Hindu sects refer to knowledge or truth as a flame rather than as a flower. The flower, linking up with the description of the author's delineating the Supreme Being as walking on flowers which Vaiyapuri Pillai identified as strictly Jaina, might be significant in this context.

The moral concretization of knowledge which is almost always elsewhere in the abstract in these ten verses of the *Kural*, is practical reducing knowledge to a daily utility. Knowledge is what makes you walk the right path in life that is the moral life as the first three verses of the ten in the chapter indicate.

In a subsequent chapter, that on learning, the poet clarifies the moral positions incumbent on acquiring any knowledge: "The learned one should be such as to give joy to those whom he meets and make them look forward to meeting him again." and "The base men will never learn anything." he says.

And he gives a very tangible image of learning in "The more you dig in the well the more the water springs up in your well; the more you learn the more it brings to your mind." And what makes you love learning? "He who sees the world as loving learning, will himself come to love learning." And "Only those who have learnt something, have eyes in their heads; others have only open sores instead of eyes."

"Even the unlearned could be considered excellent if they knew when to keep silent" he says, exasperated with those who love their voices more than their learning. "Like beasts among men are the unlearned among the learned; they are not capable of works of any repute." "Unless one learns to listen with humility, one will not be heard at all with patience."

The ten verses that make up the chapter 43 on knowledge should be quoted in full as it gives an insight into the working of the poet's mind with regard to knowledge. This chapter is entitled simply 'Knowledge', whereas the earliear chapter already quoted was entitled 'True Knowledge.'

1. Knowledge is a fortress which your enemies cannot enter or destroy.
2. Allow not your mind to roam where it will; let it stray only towards the good, always away from evil. That is true knowledge.

3. To accept the truth by whomsoever uttered and to distinguish the true from the false is indeed real knowledge.
4. Utter only words that make your thoughts clear; discern the truth when it comes from other mouths, that is the only way to real knowledge.
5. Knowledge knows no opening and closing like flowers; it is constant and in conformity with the world.
6. Knowledge consists in living in harmony with the world.
7. The man of knowledge foresees what lies ahead; the fool cannot.
8. Not to be afraid of things that have to be feared, is lack of knowledge; the wise are always afraid of things they have to be afraid of.
9. The man with real knowledge looks ahead and prevents the sorrows that might swarm on him.
10. The knowing among men have all things worth having; the man of no knowledge has nothing worth having.

In these ten verses, the poet makes his moral position clear more than he did in his ten verses on True Knowledge. Real knowledge helps you to take a moral position; the wise with real knowledge fear the things to be feared, implying immoral, or evil, acts.

The overcoming of sorrow with which the world abounds is one of the real results of knowledge and in the worldly life that the author of the *Kural* envisages sorrows can abound as a consequence of wrong acts. Knowledge helps the knower to avoid wrong acts and sets his feet on the right path, because his knowledge is of the right kind in itself. Knowledge should help you in avoiding the faults you are so capable of; to know your tendency to your faults and avoid them redeems your life whether you are king or subjects.

Praise not yourself, the poet says; self-praise can never bring any good and it is wisdom born of knowledge not to do things that bring no good to you. The purpose of all knowledge is to make you one in the world, to fit in the society you are in.

The poet goes to economic life, being very much in advance

of his times as a prophet should really be and says, "The knowing one will not lose his capital in his desire for interest." The poet exhorts the learned one saying, "When a rare opportunity occurs, do the difficult deed."

"They look like ordinary men, but they know things without being told. If by mere seeing you cannot find out what is intended, what are your eyes for?" he asks. "If you would know what passes in men's minds, study men's faces with care," he instructs his auditor. "Good scholars are exact and fluent and precise in the use of their words. Avoiding the friendship of fools is a great gain in life", he says roundly.

In a later chapter (85), on not being sufficiently wise, the poet undertakes to talk of the time when knowledge and learning may fail a man. The chapter of ten verses deserves to be quoted in full, for it is quite expressive of the moral stands of Tiruvalluvar.

1. The greatest of wants is the want of wisdom; other wants are not so wanting.
2. A fool bestowing gifts voluntarily is nothing but the luck of the receiver.
3. Even enemies of themselves cannot inflict such evils on themselves as fools wanting wisdom inflict on themselves.
4. The vanity which makes a man claim wisdom for himself is want of wisdom surely.
5. The fool when he pretends to learning, casts doubts on the learned ones.
6. Even putting on a dress to cover your nakedness becomes folly, if you know not how to cover your other faults.
7. The fool neglects good counsel and does himself a great injury.
8. He who knows nothing by himself and heeds no counsel, will be miserable and in trouble all his life.
9. The man who sets out to teach a fool, should be himself a fool; the fool will only see what he saw before.
10. He its to be considered as evil who walks the earth as a man, if he does not believe what the world itself believes in.

The moral order of the world demands that the individual do as the moral world demand and it is in that sense that Valluvar advocates that man should conform in all respects to the world he lives in, distinguishing himself by right knowledge and discipline between acts that are good and acts that are evil or bad.

The moral law is immutable and the fool transgresses the moral law by behaving as if he belonged not in this world. He can be guided by good counsel but if he will not listen to good counsel he will do himself immense harm before harming even others. The insistence that moral laws infringed harm the self, more than others is certainly a Jaina tenet or doctrine, as has been pointed out. Tiruvalluvar uses it quite often and freely.

IV

Before leaving this subject of knowledge, learning, wisdom, folly, I have one more observation to make about the chronology of Tiruvalluvar. Assertions of Tiruvalluvar are many, many of them brilliantly and aggressively positive, as when he says that Truth is that which does not harm any one. But when he makes statements that are more or less tentative he seems to be groping towards a certain compromise.

These discrepancies in tones which occur accordingly in the whole text of 1080 verses in the first two books might be accounted for if we accepted a *Kural* poet who was writing at the beginning of the first wave of positive Jainism in south India particularly Tamilnadu, and if the other assertions that are not so assertive as coming towards the end of the age when that positive wave was subsiding perhaps by the sixth century or the seventh by which the Jainas were done away with if not physically as some other rival sects crually asserted, even including each liquidations of the Śamaṇas or Jainas in their *purāṇic* texts, at least socially and banished totally from the political power centres.

This would give us two vastly different dates for the composition of the two poets, one who lived in the first century may be the contemporary of Saint Thomas, actually Śrī Kundakunda, a glorious overt practising Jaina, and, the other alive in the sixth century beset by doubts, not of his own, but about the

future of the moral and mental attitudes and order he presented. Otherwise the two dates as well as the position and tentative views in the *Kural* cannot be reconciled. This is only a tentative but the most speculative suggestion.

CHAPTER IX

On Layman's Life

I have quoted comparatively few passages from Jaina books to establish the Jaina origins of the Valluvar code of conduct as exemplified in the verses of the *Kural* so far. But none of the positions that the poet advocates in his verses are inconsistent with Jaina practice and theory as it was understood at the time and age in which the author lived.

There is no divine grace or theistic interference with one's own path. It is your excellence, a sort of existentialist assertion, before ever existentialism came into vogue as a fashion in the modern parlance. The Jaina is forced by text and precept and practice to rely to a great extent on his own initiative and effort, both for his worldly requirements and for what he might think of as his salvation.

The poet of the *Kural*, it seems, refuses to deal with salvation as such and he strictly confines himself to worldly requirements and, at every turn, whether it were learning or using his wealth in proper methods in looking for a wife and the promotion of his children's interests and learning and character, in confrontation with his own self-reliance and efforts at bettering his aim and ideal of being a good person.

The poet of the *Kural* draws his moral stances more from the observation of everyday experiences and happenings and is not afraid of being considered too worldly in certain sections of his verses and chapters where he always advocates a worldliness much at variance with Indian, or Hindu, other-worldliness with regard to wealth, pursuit of joy, happiness, even knowledge etc. etc.

The *Kural* poet, as the Jaina teachers, claims a sort of omniscience even though he, as they, draw from daily experiences that are common to all mankind. The Jaina doctrines pride them-

selves on being much more consistent with daily actual conduct of man than curious other sects like Śaivism or Vaiṣṇavism can claim.

And if the author of the *Kural* raises any flag, it is the flag of ordinary human life in the larger humanistic interest for the welfare of all here and now, not for inheriting a vague other kingdom, or of a future, that is somewhat nebulous, and neither here nor there.

The manifold aspect of things as they exist, which gives the Jaina doctrine its name *anekānta* because it is at the basis of all Jainas doctrines might be inferred from the manifold aspects of life that Tiruvalluvar considers in his verses, drawing various conclusions of variance among themselves sometimes from them. He himself does not use the word *anekānta* though he uses the opposite *ekānta* in two verses of his. But the *anekānta* doctrine of the Jainas does not concern us here, as Tiruvalluvar was not interested in the exposition of doctrine so much as in valid moral practice.

It has to be acknowledged that though the author might be a Jaina and dependant on Jaina doctrine for his moral view of the world, the *Kural* accepts as most Jaina masters do, the partial truth of other systems and doctrines and uses them in the text. The partial truth, of other doctrines, *naya*, is implied in many places in *Tirukkural*, sometimes implicitly, and often explicitly.

The Jaina logic insists on precision in expression and the author of the *Kural* often calls for it himself and makes somewhat precise and easily interpretable statements which allow of no imprecise significance or ambiguity to cloud issues.

The *Tirukkural* author seems to accept, by and large, the threefold division of existent things, common to Jaina doctrine. He deals with the sentients, especially man in his daily life, and he is only occasionally concerned, if at all, with the world of the nonsentient.

The moral stances that Valluvar advocates in his book, the *Kural* take additional significance if we look at the way the Jaina feel towards the bondage of the soul and the individual cycle of births and deaths. "The Jaina will say that the defiled condition of the soul" as Dr. Jaini in his book *Jaina Path of Purification* observes on page 107, "leads to its continuouos rebirth in various

states of embodiment. Existence in such states, characterized by desire, involves activities which draw *karmic* matter; this matter in turn contributes to the soul's further defilement, hence to further embodiment. Thus we have the basic process through which one is held in the cycle of transmigration."

One thing stands out clear in the Tamil verses of the *Kural* in more than twenty places, the poet refers to the cycle of births and deaths and the escaping from the compulsory bondage of it. This alone might be enough to pin the poet down as a Jaina in practice and faith.

The moral stances of the individual have finally to reduce the *karmic* bondage and free him ultimately from the cycle of births and deaths to which he is condemned. That is why the author, a Jaina, presumably, writes a treatise to guide those who will listen to moral and good actions. Being free from *karmic* bondage, is Tiruvalluvar's aim. Moral and good acts were emphasized by the Jaina more than the others as conducive to freedom of the soul in the final analysis. The socalled lower moral classics, eighteen in number, which succeeded the *Saṅgam* classics and from the second wave of the Tamil literary movement, were all composed by Jainas. *Tirukkural* is usually placed at the head of the 18 *kizhkanakku* works dealing with morals, and most of the 18 works are by Jainas and deal with morality in general and not always in Jaina terms.

In treating of knowledge or folly, the poet does not use any of the terms connected with Buddhism, Hinduism, or any other subjects or any other religion. He does not use exclusively Jaina words either. This might be interpreted as a conscious attempt at keeping away doctrinal matter from his text. If anything it indicates, it is a nondoctrinal approach in the interests of the commoners of all kinds. The emotional commitment to self reliance which Jainism advocates towards knowledge and things of the mind is advocated in full in the *Kural* and the poet calls upon men to educate themselves and acquire the right kind of knowledge, by themselves.

The *Kural* emphasis on self reliance as the Jaina emphasis on self-reliance, is great; that alone might be enough perhaps to identify the *Kural* as a Jaina document for moral conduct of life in all its worldly aspects.

The *Kural* poet did not concern himself with salvation or

heaven or libration except by moral acts of a recognizable social kind and order. More than being secular, the poet was indifferent to salvation in a Jaina sense; if you have the seed of salvation in you, the seed for winning out of the cycle of lives, you will arrive at it, otherwise you don't, and nothing more need be said about it, he seems to imply. The *bhavya* doctrine of the Jainas is something to which the poet of the *Kural* seems wholy to subscribe. The quality of the soul called *bhavyatva* is something which determines your salvation according to the Jainas. The *Kural* poet has nothing to offer us about it, it is beyond the sweep of his book up morality.

Samyag-darśana is a pure Jaina doctrine and it denotes having the correct view of things, material, moral and spiritual. The ladder corresponding with fourteen steps of attaining the correct view is part of the doctrinal thesis of the Jaina and the author of the *Kural* insists at every step on the right view of things without calling it by its Jaina name or talking of it in Jaina terminology.

On almost every moral point that he makes, he calls for what might be called *samyag-dṛṣṭi*. Living in the world as a good citizen producing wealth and sharing it, being a householder and attending learned councils, learning what is true in knowledge and avoiding evil company, as well as evil acts, all of them invariably call for *samyag-dṛṣṭi*, if you will, and Tiruvalluvar advocates it overtly, if not covertly, as to every step that man takes in the world. In more than a score of places the poet Tiruvalluvar advocates the right view of things as well as translating it into action. This again by itself might indicate that Tiruvalluvar was a Jaina by persuasion and practice.

The attempt of the author of the *Kural* in his moral maxims is or seems to be, to discover the *sva-bhāva*, as the Jaina way names it, of the soul and seeker. He views this *sva-bhāva* as wholly moral, a state of true knowledge, discarding all false views and ideas, and capable of proceeding further from there. The poet does not labour on the ego or the egocentricism of acts but on the moral nature of actions, asserting the *sva-bhāva* of human beings as wholly moral; to do what he knows naturally to be good, is good for the right thinking person, he says in one context. It is not freedom from egocentred actions that Tiruvalluvar seeks but the nature-centred, the moral-centred, act,

thus going a step beyond the *Gītā*, dear to the Hindus of many generations.

Again the author of the *Kural* does not talk of the librated beings or the ones who have achieved salvation or even complete *samyag-darśana*; it is a tremendous impact on self and society, even according to the Jaina doctrine and he leaves it to those who can attain to it; he is more concerned with the ordinary, more malleable, worldly, and the material-minded, human being in the market place, rather than those within the confines of what may be called a higher sphere.

And *Arhat-hood* or Jina-hood, no longer has necessity for good and evil or the cycle of births and deaths, or making of wealth and the sharing it with others.

The doctrinal part of the Jaina way of life was interested in dealing with the details of the achievement of Jainahood but the *Kural* poet was interested at a lower but wholly moral level of achievement, the reaching of moral grandeur within the ordinary world, consisting of home, township and market place and learned assemblies and not so learned people and society as it is generally constituted.

In a chapter on base men, the author of the *Kural* says in round terms that the man who is base claims the rights of Gods, "he does as he pleases". This would clearly indicate that, at least in this verse, and for purposes of his own, the author of the *Kural* has borrowed the definition of gods given by practising Jaina monks, the *deva-mūḍhatā*,* the delusions pertaining to the gods of the Hindu pantheon. In the words of Dr. Jaini, this indicates the common tendency of men to worship indiscriminately any god who claims to lead human being to salvation. Faced with the wide spread popularity of Vedic and Hindu gods, *purāṇic* gods, Jaina monks have undertaken to expose the inferior nature of these deities. Pointing out that such beings are still subject to the passions and hence themselves not free from bondages, they held that only a Jina sitting in totally detached meditation is fit to lead others to *mokṣa*.

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* *var-opalipsay-āśāvān rāga-dveṣa-malīmasāḥ/*
devatā yad-upāsīta devatā-mūḍham-ucyate//
Samanta-bhadra, *Ratna-karaṇḍa-śrāvak-ācāra*, verse 23.

In this context, the idea that base men act like gods obeying no moral law other than what subserves them, acquires a sort of Jaina significance which cannot be escaped, the poet clubbing gods and base men together and their purposes.

There is one great thing that is missing in the *Kural* when we consider it dispassionately. Moral texts of various kinds composed in India insist on praising the *gurus* somewhat inordinately, in the context it would seem. The maxims of Tiruvalluvar are completely free from any indication of such *guru*-worship common to many of the Hindu and other Indian sects.

The Jaina doctrines have keen warnings against a kind of false beliefs and it places second among them, after debunking a faith in gods, the faith in *gurus* which is on the whole a false faith known as the *guru-mūḍhatā*. A second type of false insight or belief overcome by true Jaina insight is that pertaining to teachers and their teachings, *guru-mūḍhatā*.* India has long abounded in ascetics and teachers, spiritual preceptors of all arts, preaching numerous doctrines and engaging in an incredible diversity of practices. Although most such practitioners profess to be free from attachment to the world, their activities are said by the Jainas to belie this claim.

The whole of the *Kural*, however many poets might have contributed to it, three or four or five or more, whether they lived in any of the periods before and after suggested by scholars from the first to the sixth century, none of them have indicated any thing about a *guru* or a *guru* tradition or a source of reverence for *gurus* in the moral code that is presented.

This would be strange if the *Kural* belonged to a Hindu tradition that seems so full of reverence, sometimes even undeserved, for *gurus* and *guru*-dom. This might be only a negative aspect of the Jaina nature of the maxims found in the *Kural*, but it might be really suggestive of a fiercely independent rebel thinking on the subject, granting the *guru-śiṣya* tradition as productive of a kind of slavery in thinking instead of any great new originality. Alone among the ancient texts of the Indians,

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* *sagranth-ārambha-hiṁsānāṁ saṁsār-āvarta-vartinām|*
pākhaṇḍināṁ puraskāro jñeyaṁ pākhaṇḍi-mohanam||
Samanta-bhadra, *Ratna-karaṇḍa-śrāvak-ācāra*, verse 24.

the *Kural* boasts of no *guru* as having dictated its moral maxims. This might mean that the Jaina doctrine of *guru-mūḍhatā* was taken to heart by the author of the *Kural*.

Perverted views, non-restraint, carelessness, and passions are the causes of bondage, says the Jaina sage Umā-svāti and the *Kural* sets out to correct perverted views, non-restraint, carelessness and the passions in moral day to day life. The author of the *Kural* has a whole chapter of ten *kurals* on carelessness which might be quoted here in full.

1. To be careless of things in one's happiness is harmful; it might bring you greater harm than being angry.
2. Continued poverty can kill many things; similarly carelessness about things that have to be done will bring a lack of renown.
3. Glory will not be his who is careless and negligent, say all the great books of the world.
4. Those who are afraid cannot be protected by any fences; no good will ever come to a man who is careless.
5. The careless ones will be negligent and will not be forewarned or forearmed and will regret their carelessness when misfortune overtakes them.
6. Nothing yields so much as not being careless of anything, or of any one, at any time.
7. There is nothing impossible to him who always cares.
8. Things that are praiseworthy should be pursued and done, if you are careless about doing the things that have to be done, you invite disaster and things will not prosper with you for seven lives.
9. When you are uplifted by joy just remember those who have been put down by their own negligence of things.
10. It is easy for one to achieve all that he desires, if he keep his purpose constantly in mind and work without carelessness.

Was the poet of the *Kural* talking of the same doctrine of carelessness that the Jaina *Ācārya* was talking about. It would seem so; he uses the word which was known to Jaina usage, occurring in the same sense in the major and minor Tamil epics.

The only thing is that the poet of the *Kural* reduces even the doctrinaire words and terminology of a system to a basic usage trying to use it etymologically, in its simplest and purest and perhaps also deepest sense. The pursuit of excellence in moral living was more essential in the poet's mind than freedom from bondage, salvation as it was called, and he seems to have brought everything he knew to that criterion to make it work for the ordinary person in the market place, being a humanist of rare vintage.

Jaina texts prescribe diluted vows as the duty of the layman. They are often only easier versions of the vows practised by the monk or ascetic with greater vigour and rigor. Tke Jaina interest in the laity was great, unlike the disinterest of the Budhhists to the laity. The Jainas are known to have produced during their entire history over forty if not more tracts for the Jaina laymen. These *śrāvak-ācāras* are said to begin with the second century, in fact with Kunda-kunda Ācārya's *caritra-prābhṛta* and ending with the *Dharma-saṅgraha-ṭīkā* of Yaśovijaya of the seventeenth century.

There is no reason to doubt the *Kural* being a *śrāvak-ācāra* in the traditional manner, though it seems to have been lost to Jainism fairly early in its history perhaps at the time of the general prosecution of Jaina cults of the Tamil land during the sometimes crude onslaught of the Śaivites and the Vaiṣṇavites who invariably styled the *Śramaṇa* as serpents; it was more or less a fight for political power, the Śaivites claiming many rulers who had started as Jainas as converts to Śaivism and the Vaiṣṇavas doing likewise.

If we accept Kunda-kunda Ācārya as the author of the original *Kural* in whatever form (as it exists or much briefer than what we have now as the *Kural*) it might explain many things. The identification of Kunda-kunda Ācārya as the teacher of a certain ruler of the pre-Pallava line ruling from Conjeepuram with ambitions of founding an empire, might explain some chapters in the *Kural* which are addressed specifically to a ruling king with the right kind of ambitions.

The Jainas were not the only ones to lay claim to a knowledge of the moral order of the universe, but it is obvious that the moral order prescribed and extolled by the *Kural* is more Jaina in character and quality than other moral codes of pre-

vious, or contemporary periods. The large insistence on the making of wealth and of sharing it, the greater importance attached to ascetic orders and the necessity for the householders to support them, and the insistence on the freedom to be won from the cycle of births and deaths by right moral acts, all seem to indicate that the *Kural* was a Jaina work, rather than a work of any other persuasion or practice.

It of course avoids specifically recognizable Jaina doctrinal vocabulary or terminology. Whether this was a conscious effort on the part of the poet, we have no means of knowing; he was perhaps interested in talking of a moral order of things free of Jaina doctrines of salvation or theology or monasticism at a time when Jainas were consolidating their hold on society, or alternatively disappearing from the scene.

Or perhaps he was interested in creating a code of conduct that would bring more persons, without their being conscious of it into the strict Jaina moral fold. Whatever the reason, it is immaterial; as a code of conduct, the *Kural* follows a Jaina order to things, whether we like to concede it or not. It should be rather obvious with the *Kural's* insistence on non-killing, on asceticism, and the like but Tamil scholars have been with rare exceptions loathe to accept the really obvious.

Both by many internal reading between the lines and by circumstantiate evidence as far it can be taken as established, beyond any doubt the *Kural* is a Jaina work meant for laymen within the Jaina fold and that Tiruvalluvar himself was undoubtedly of Jaina persuasion.

CHAPTER X

Ideas of Fate, Karman, the Cycle of Births and Deaths

I

Many ancient systems of Hindu thought subscribed to the ideas of *karman,* fate, a cycle of endless births and deaths, each birth defined by merits accrued in prior life and the nature of it all. Though largely identified as Hindu in content there seems to be evidence to show that the idea of *karman* and the sequential nature of fate determining who rides a palanquin and who carries it, seems to be derived in Hinduism itself from the pre-Vedic Śramaṇa or Jaina doctrines currently found ready-made to hand by Hindu thinkers of the post-Vedic age

In a sense as Dr. G.C. Pande argues in his learned *Śramaṇa Tradition: Its History and Contribution to Indian Culture,* it was the Jaina insistence and practice of positing *karman,* acts of merit and demerit, being the cause of life and the moral good being ascertainable according to the quality of results that permeated the Indian thinking of even Vedic orthodoxy and moulded them in largely recognizable form to day.

The Jaina concepts of *karman,* the content and forms of it and its compulsive sequences and the idea of fate arising out of it, and, of how fate is controlled or overcome by acts by human beings who can assimilate right knowledge and set foot upon the right ways etc. which was larger evidence, permeate the whole of Indian thought. If the reader is interested in pursuing the subject he is referred to the detailed study made available in somewhat clear terms to chapter IV, entitled, Machanism of Bondage in his *Jaina Path of Perfection* by Dr. Padmanabha S. Jaini (first Indian edition, 1979, pp. 107-133). But to make

our position clearer I shall quote only a few sentences from that chapter as an explication of what Tiruvalluvar has to say of *karman*, fate, cycle of births, good and bad as precursors of good and evil in present or coming lives. Dr. Padmanabha S. Jaini writes: Jaina thinkers have invested a great deal of energy in describing the precise mechanism of bondage of *saṁsāra*, the cycle of transmigration; no other Indian system or school has been nearly so concerned with the details thereof.

This phenomenon perhaps reflects an attempt to lessen the heavy emotional burden which the Jaina's view of bondage places upon him. He envisions his soul's tormented involvement with the material universe on a vast scale; this involvement has had no beginning, and it is likely to continue almost indefinitely. He further believes it incorrect to imagine that the soul was once pure but later became defiled. It has always been impure, just as a seam of gold ore is taken one step further. (Absolute purification may be achieved if the proper refining method is applied.) Speaking in a general way the Jaina will say that the defiled condition of the soul leads to its continuous birth, rebirth, in various states of embodiment. Existence in such states characterized by desire involves activities which draw *karmic* matter; this matter in turn contributes to the soul's further defilement, hence to further embodiment. Thus we have the basic process through which one is held in the cycle of transmigration.

The Jaina system has developed a detailed series of thoughts, setting out the process by which the *karmic* bondage exists and works and operates. The Jaina view of salvation is freedom from the cycle of births and deaths and how to achieve this, once and for all, is the way of Jaina ascetcism and a course of conduct, moralistic and directed towards *karmic* freedom or freedom from *karman* at the end, beyond a good and evil state.[1]

The Jaina theory of *karman* is founded on the simple law of cause and effect. One has to bear sooner or later, the consequences of his or her acts of omission and commission, good

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* *doṣ-āvaraṇayor-hānir-niḥśeṣ-āsty-ati-śāyanāt/*
kva-cid-yathā sva-hetub-hyo bahir-antar-mala-kṣayḥ//
Samanta-bhadra: *Āpta-mīmāṁsā*: verse 4.

and bad, it is not possible to escape them. You reap what you have sown. And since the consequences cannot all be worked out in one and the same life time, there may positively follow a future life to enable their fruition; and the process goes on. The obvious disparity and diversity in the mental, physical, hereditary, environmental and sundry other conditions of individuals at and since birth, which cannot be explained away as being caused by one's efforts or by chance, fully substantiate the doctrine of *karman.*

With the help of metempsychosis or transmigration of souls it becomes a proven fact, and through it their continuity and immortality is established beyond doubt. The *karman* doctrine also does away with the necessity of any outside agency, a supreme being creator or destroyer, preserver and dispenser of justice for the purpose of punishing or rewarding human beings, as the late justice J.L. Jaini observed. It is not fate, nor even predestination, but it is the continuing balancing of the different accounts which we keep with the forces of life. There can be no mistake, no supperssion, and no evasion. The credit and debit sides go on automatically and whatever is due to us is paid ungrudgingly without demand.

No wonder that with such taste for accounting for life and its good and evil in precise terms, the Jaina made good as traders to the nation.

And in the cause of reading the *Kural,* we do come across the idea of life being a balance sheet, showing credits and debits. For instance the *Kural* says, "what more can man want of life, if he earns wealth by right means; he is assured of wealth here and heaven hereafter?" What more can he want?

He talks of "seven times seven lives" of persons to come and in one of the inexorable verses makes the statement that one becomes a palanquin-rider by merit of his actions whereas another is forced to carry it on the merit of his actions in a previous life.

II

The pertinent quotations in the *Kural* might sometimes be scattered all over the text, but in cases like fate, the poet puts his ideas together in a complete chapter of ten verses. It occurs

as the last chapter (38) of book one of the *Kural* dealing with day to day life.

1. Actions dictated by good fate produce prosperity, laziness, dictated again by fate, leads to poverty.
2. It is adverse fate which makes one foolish; friendly fate makes even the most ignorant knowledgeable about making money.
3. Even if one learn all the subtle texts, what ultimately prevails is that knowledge which fate has decreed one.
4. It is two different fates in this world, one is wealthy, the other wise. Wealth and wisdom do not seem to dwell in the same person.
5. Pursuing wealth, if fate so wills it, what ill one does turns good and what good one does turns evil.
6. If fate deny you, you cannot keep anything; even the treasures you throw away will not leave you if fate so wills it.
7. Even if you amass a crore, you may not be able to enjoy it unless fate decrees it.
8. If because of poverty one is denied enjoyment by fate, one begins to think of renunciation; thus does one reverse the decree of fate.
9. One is happy when favoured by fortune; the same one complains when misfortune hits him. Who?
10. There is nothing stronger than fate; even if we try to circumvent it with cleverness, fate manages to overtake us.

As we can well see in this chapter, the poet is obsessed with the role of fate in worldly things like prosperity, wealth, affluence and poverty and the ills of it as any layman not interested in metaphysics, will be. The role of fate may be metaphysical and abstract, but the common human person apprehends it, as it affects his prosperity, or otherwise, in so far as he fares ill or well in the station he occupies in the world as a responsible citizen, trader, tiller of the soil, or whatever.

The wealth or nonwealth of a person in the world is a direct intervention of fate when ordinary men and women become aware of it at all.

And again he advocates persistence and persevering action to overcome what might look like fate.

The idea of fate and free will in Valluvar's *Kural* are mixed up with the common faiths of the day, and there is nothing inconsistent any way with the commonly held Jaina ideas of that time and age though they might equally demonstrably have been the commonly held faith or superstition of the Hindus, Buddhists, and other sects rampant in that time and age.

The idea of fate, like the idea of penance, might be a gift of the Jainas to the moral world of the Indians in general. At what time the idea steeped into and permeated wholly the field of Indian thought might be difficult now to say, but we can hazard the guess that it had become wholly an Indian possession by the time that the poet of the *Kural* began writing his texts for the moral guidance of the people or shortly thereafter.

III

In the matter of rebirth, reincarnation and the cycle of lives, Tiruvalluvar has no separate chapter but he glances at the idea directly and obliquely throughout his text as a commonly accepted as well as a personally held belief of his times and his own in the general context.

He speaks of the here in the world and of the hereafter either in heaven or hell or in a new birth in mostly recognizable Jaina terms. The consequences of action, good or bad, are the corner-stones of the Jaina belief and Valluvar shows himself as no exception to it. In the palanquin-bearer and *vice versa* he does point out that meritorious deeds make you ride in the palanquin, while the less meritorious actors of the world who chose evil, are forced to carry it. Heaven as a reward for virtuous acts or meritorious deeds and hell as punishment for sinful acts, is not held up consciously, except in passing, by the author of the *Kural* making it apparent that he held the Jaina belief that men worked out the consequences of their acts not in enjoyment in heaven or in suffering in hell, but in the actual conditions of their living in consequent lives themselves, limited or vast as a consequence of their own actions. The cycle of cause and effect within human lives conditioning worldly and other matters might be wholly of Jaina origin, as far as Tiruvalluvar was concerned.

IV

I cannot conclude this chapter without glancing at the idea of righteousness which in the *Kural* might often be interpreted or translated as the right path in the human context.

The right path is wholly a Jaina concept and the author of the *Kural* labours mightily to point out the right path to the man who would bring to a successful conclusion his worldly life. Actually renunciation and asceticism are the conclusions to be desired of life and even poverty, lack of wordly goods and material possessions, are good in the sense that they can lead you, at once instead of eventually, to renunciation and the ascetic life as he says in chapter 38, verse 8, already quoted in the previous section.

The metaphysical concept of the right way, righteousness, *dharma*, all become concrete and of practical apprehension. In the verses of Tiruvalluvar religion was a way of life in the larger Indian context, not merely a bundle of metaphysical speculations or spiritual and dimly apprehended superstitions or acts of faith. It is in this sense that Valluvar points to a way of life to a complete moral code to live by and offers a code of conduct for every one under whatever conditions he might have to live.

Before quoting in full the chapter on righteousness, which he places at the very beginning of his first book, it being the fourth chapter after the preliminary three chapters invoking God, rain and ascetics, I shall quote from various other chapters to indicate the sweep of righteousness, the idea of the right way in Valluvar's *Kural* and try to indicate how far they steam from Jaina ways of living and Jaina ideas of the right path.

Equanimity, a sense of balanced ideas, impartiality, humility, a right knowledge of truth and the values of moral conduct among other things make up this right path or way to sense control that has to be the outcome of human life. Some of the acts of righteousness are positive, some negative, some are passive, some active; some deal with others, some deal only with oneself. But finally it is oneself that is the victim of all one's actions.

1. The height of righteousness is impartiality; friend or foe or stranger, every one should be given his due.

2. Righteousness indicates that one should give to the worthy; the worth of the receiver and his choice makes one's gift weighty.
3. Life dwells in fleshly homes; righteousness dwells with shame on any evil acts done.
4. They who know say that the man set on the right path and on the way to perfection as a human being, to him all good things are natural.
5. To do good even to those who seek to do you evil, that is indeed perfection and righteousness.
6. A natural inclination to righteousness and a sense of shame at doing something ignoble, clearly mark a man of nobility by birth.
7. The urge to do something forbidden is folly of follies and a sign of the unrighteous man.
8. One who wants to be considered noble and righteous would do no deeds that would sully his name.
9. The success achieved by unrighteous deeds will certainly produce sorrow.
10. Scriptures, Brahmin codes and righteousness form the three bases of a king's justice.

This might be an interpolation as it is contrary to Valluvar, insisting on a Brahmin code; but he leaving it with scriptures righteousness of Brahmin is meant here perhaps in the *Śramaṇic* sense.

Work not evil for another even forgetfully; if you do, the god of righteousness would work you evil untold.

The man of strong mind does not shrink from righteousness. Any deviation from the doing of your duties will bring swift retribution.

And finally I append the whole chapter on righteousness again which forms the first chapter of the *Kural* proper or the best and fourth chapter of the invocation as a code of conduct for men here and now in the age of the poet and of subsequent times as of future times as well, if the world is inclined to some moral order as the author of the *Tirukkural* sought with foresight to impose on it in an age when the Jainas were becoming affluent in the land, due to their earlier tilling of the land and the later commercial and mercantile activities, ushering in per-

haps the golden age of India's prosperity and great wealth which were to tempt the western colonizers.

1. Righteousness bestows distinction and wealth; what more can man want?
2. There can be no greater good than following the right path; there is no greater evil than lacking a will for it.
3. As far as it lies in you, depart not from the ways of righteousness; do everything that is righteous.
4. All that is done in a righteous frame of mind, is good; all else is vain.
5. Righteousness consists of steering clear of four things—envy, lust, anger and harsh speech.
6. Postpone not righteous acts; now is the time for them. Your righteous acts will be remembered and remain to your credit at your death.
7. Do you desire to know the consequences of righteousness? Look at these two; one carries the palanquin, the other rides in it.
8. Spend your days following the right path doing righteous deeds; then you will escape the wheel of lives and deaths.
9. Righteousness alone brings joy; all else is vexation, vanity and deserves no praise.
10. What is good is to be done; what is evil is to be avoided.

We note with surprise again that Tiruvalluvar, true to his worldly wisdom and code of conduct promises no heaven for righteousness or for doing the right acts, following the right path, but only great joy here and now in a world that values affluence and prosperity. This is truly a Jaina distinction, born of metaphysical or doctrinal concerns of longstanding. The *Kural* poet wants all his followers to be palanquin-riders. This should clinch the argument for considering Valluvar a Jaina and *Tirukkural* as a Jaina text meant for lay practitioners before they became renouncers of the world and of the senses trying to be free of the cycle of births.

CHAPTER XI

Greatness, Perfection, Purity

The *Kural* of Valluvar tries to take man, the ordinary human being, through life, making him walk the right path, with right discrimination, to arrive at moral and respectable goals that are time-sanctioned and accepted as right and righteous by the wise ones.

Who are the wise ones to whom Tiruvalluvar appeals? They might belong to any religious persuation, but it is obvious in the place (Tamilnadu) and the time (the first century A.D.) at which he is writing his appeal to the wise men who embrace the Jaina way of life, as a way to moral excellence.

More than other religions and disciplines, the Jainas appealed to the right view, the right path and the right mode of behaviour and above all admonished the worldly ones to belong whole heartedly and righteously to the world till they could, with impurity and ardent lack of desire, turn away from the worldly pursuits and life to become ascetics and win salvation finally.

The attempt of the *Kural* and its poet is to instruct the men to make the most of the world by worldly pursuits, morally followed, affluence gained, evil overcome. Wherever we quote from in the *Kural*, from whatever chapter, it is evident that the attempt of the poet is to dignify and morally uplift your life and every day actions, so that you can have a recognizable grand purpose to life even in your most insignificant acts.

"Can love be kept out by locked doors? Distress of a dear friend will bring tears to the eyes of those that love him", the poet observes in the chapter posing "loving kindness" as a sort of total purpose to life. "The link which sustains the soul with this body of bones is the link of love," the implication is that the link of love is that which makes life significant and meaningful. Loving kindness is a strong ally of all the virtues; it is a

strong defence against evil; therefore cultivate it, so that you fall not into the temptation of evil.

And he concludes the chapter with the verse "Only that man lives well who has loving kindness in his heart, all others are mere skin, clothing the bones underneath. "The humanistic purpose to all life thus enunciated by Tiruvalluvar betrays nothing inconsistent, he undertakes to delineate the larger humanistic morality of the Jaina way of life.

Of the many practical hints the poet of the *Kural* gives to a man interested in leading the moral life, the most practical hints are the simplest and sometimes the sweetest expressed and most easy of practice. "Sweet speech towards all" is one such advice and "the sense of impartiality" is a virture that one should cultivate, as it were by habit. "The height of righteousness is impartiality, friend or foe or stranger, every one should be given his due", the poet says and adds, "yield not to partiality; the balance of an unbiased mind is the sign of a great man in the world." In the same breath the poet insists that you do your duty; "doing your duty is more precious than life itself." "Scriptures are forgotten and relearnt easily; but bad living, leading to dereliction of the duties laid down on you, cannot be easily lived down." And he adds that "Good conduct is the seed of the good life; improper conduct causes disaster." And proper conduct is in living in harmony with the word. "Those who do not strive to live in harmony with the world, however learned, are ignorant. "The discovery of what is in harmony with the world was a major concern of the Jaina way of life in the wake of and conflict with other and varied ways which India gave rise to; none put it this way, this exact way it would seem, though Valluvar was writing not for the religious-minded but for the wordly men.

To be tolerant of another's evil act towards ourselves is good; it is even better, if you can forget it," observes the *Kural* poet. The idea of forgiving evil acts against oneself might belong to any Hindu way of life, among them of the weaker sections of it. "Towards him who harms you through his pride of insolence, be tolerant; conquer him with proof of your worth." This might be a wholly Jaina admonition.

"Not to be envious of others should come of one's own nature." And he adds "Envy itself is scourge enough for the

envious; they need no other enemies to bring them to ruin!" And the crown is the Jaina argument. "Envy makes you commit many sins; it does away with prosperity and will cast you into another place than heaven." You cannot achieve prosperity by being envious of another. He who is without envy will achieve riches finally," says the poet Tiruvalluvar.

The man who slanders another will himself be subject of slander. Controlling your tongue against slanderous words is one of the many obviously stated virtues of the Jaina pursuit of life and Valluvar devotes a whole chapter of ten verses to it putting it high in the scale of values.

As a complement to not slandering, the poet has a chapter on not indulging in frivolous talk, which again gives evidence of the Jaina objective of taking care of the details of all aspects of your moral life. "Even forgetfully the man of uncoloured vision will not say futile words." And the poet admonishes, "Speak only words that are goodly and useful; speak not unfruitful, purposeless word." Tiruvalluvar himself followed the precept he so sagely hands down to others; he has said nothing purposeless and fruitful in the whole of the *Kural*.

Again, we have evidence of the influence and impact of the Jaina way of life on the poet when he says "To sin is to act pridefully; evil man are not afraid of sins while good man will always be" reducing sins and acts of sin to the natural humanistic component that Jaina doctrine realised.

"Evil is to be more feared than fire" observes the *Kural* poet. "That one sinned, or pursued evil courses because of poverty is no excuse; sinful acts only make you all the proper." And "he who does injustice to others will be saddened and suffer sadness" and suffering being the ultimate evil consequences according to the Jaina conception. To save yourself, quit sins. "If you have any love left for yourself, sin not; sins will surely destroy you."

The Jaina way of life has many basic things to say about economics and the way of material things in life, the making of wealth and the distribution of it. Valluvar followed the economic precepts of Jainism rather than those of any other discipline of his time. In a chapter on benevolence he observes, "Whatever has been produced by your own efforts is indeed for the use of the whole world." "The wealth of the man who is truly benevolent is like the water of the tank in the town; it is for the use of all."

And, "A benevolent man is like the fruit-bearing tree in the town; every one can partake of its fruit." "The benevolent become poor", he adds, "only when they are not able to give to those who ask. And if by being generous, one becomes poor, such poverty is worth pursuing and attaining." A strange economics this, but one practised as a way by the idealistic Jainas both in history and in life today. At least theoretically.

The poet of the *Kural* recurs to the theme, when he says, of not doing evil even to those who do you, or desire you, evil, thus strengthening the claims of the author's acquaintance with Christian thought, "If on the forenoon of the day you inflict injury on another, the injury will revert on you in the afternoon," he says and adds, "Evil recoils on him who does evil knowingly; those who do not want to suffer, should avoid injuring others."

Reflecting on the transience of life the *Kural* poet makes all the usual observations and one particularly that might have been impossible for him except under Jaina influence. "The fledgling bird flies the nest and discards it; this is but a symbol of the life that flies the body when the time comes." And, "Doing the things that need to be done before your tongue becomes still and the last hiccup does away with your breath, is good indeed. And poor fellow he who will not be alive the next month, thinks not a million things but a million million things." Poor fellow indeed!

Human justice may be a chancy thing but the poet of the *Kural* had great faith in it; he says that it will rain seasonally and the harvests yield well in season, in a land, where justice reigns. And he observes that the king rules the land, but justice should rule the ruler. The farmer weeds out the tares from his fields in the interests of the good crop; so a king should weed out the wicked and punish the evil-doers in his land in the interests of the good men in his land. Lack of rain creates a parched land; lack of justice creates parched men.

Speaking of perseverance in the right path, the poet says, "It is the excellence of intense and persevering work that gives benevolence its pride words worth pondering in a Jaina context. He who is illfated might find it no disgrace but a fellow who brings ruin on himself by laziness will be disgraced. "Even fate which might be considered indomitable can be defeated by

endeavour", he offers hope with the last observation on perseverance.

Laying down his *obiter dicta* on public men, he speculates on the nature and condition of a good country to live in, and comes up with the following observations. "That is the best of countries which is not harrassed by enemies, and does not allow its subjects to feel want. Five qualities distinguish a good country from the bad—freedom from epidemics, prosperity, good harvests, happy people and strong fortresses." And true to the spirit of his age, he says, that it is a good country which is free from civil factions, or regicides.

The poet takes a look at friendship and what he says regarding the friendships of king and public men might also be true of ordinary folk as well. "Friendship with the wise is like the waxing moon; it makes you wax greater. Friendship with fools makes you wane like the waning moon." "One smiles and smiles and claims to be a friend; but to be friends in the depth of the heart is what matters really." "Friendship relieves your distress as naturally as your hand helps in keeping up your falling dress," a real definition of friendship in its true nature. "Even misfortunes might be helpful to you; they help in discovering to you who are your true friends." To avoid being the friend of fools is a great gain indeed.

Voicing what obviously is again a Jaina sentiment, Triuvalluvar observes that "That which brings harmful disunity among men is called hatred by those who know." And "hatred is a sickness that can be avoided; he who can avoid hatred will have fame without a shadow all his life. He who keeps himself free of hatred and enmity can be defeated by no one. Hatred surely leads one to ruin; the prestige and power of wealth come to one when one is free of hatred. All afflictions spring from hatred; friendliness brings pride of profit and wealth."

Advising his readers not to drink alcoholic liquor the poet makes quite a few observations with insight. It might be profitable to find out how many of these sayings find echoes in Jaina scriptures. "A mother looks on a drunkard's joy with sorrow. How unhappy the wise are when they see the drunken joys of another? "He who is guilty of the abomination of drink, on him will the fair maid called modesty turn her back. To pay for drinks, and buy ignorance, is ignorance indeed. To

preach to a drunkard words of wisdom, is to search for a drowned man with a torch. Look at the antics of a drunken fool. He cannot feel his own antics under drink and will be so stupid as not to avoid them?"

It is obvious from the text of the *Kural* that Tiruvalluvar has no high regard for men considered of high caste birth; he tries to redefine Brahminhood to suit his new needs born of a social and moral kind. In the chapter on high birth he makes it more than clear that he regards not birth as the criterion of high birth but qualities and moral character. He says, "A natural inclination to righteousness and a sense of shame in doing evil are to be found in none but those who can be considered of high birth", and adds, "those who are to be can be of high birth betray themselves by three things, right conduct, truthfulness, and delicacy". And he adds, "persons of trully noble, or high birth give evidence of four things, cheerfulness, beneficence, pleasing words and a temperament which does not readily find fault with others," implying that those who have these four qualities are to be considered of high birth. Those who have to be called high born will never do anything demanding, though it might mean great profit to them. Even when not endowed with wealth, the munificence of the high born will not dwindle. Even when down and out, the nobly born will not do things which are of dubious merit. Like a spot on the moon, the black spot of the fault on a man of high birth will strike the eye of the beholder. If a person displays no compassion in his demeanour to others, it will be right for us to consider him not high born or of noble birth. The nature of a soil is to be known by the shoots it puts forth; the nobility of a man will be known by his acts and words. If good is desired, one should cultivate a sense of shame; if recognition of nobility is required one should be humble.

It is evident that in these ten verses the poet questions as often as not the idea of nobility or height by birth, defining such nobility and high birth by the acts, and words and benevolence and compassion of the person. The Jaina denial of caste as giving high birth or nobility is emphasized effectively in this chapter.

In the next chapter entitled Shamefulness, the poet observes that small deeds make even man-mountains look small and that

men who fall from nobility are like the hair of men cut off from the head, useless and contemptible, and, advises man not to do anything dishonourable, even if it be for the sake of glory or honour. To a man who is trully noble, dishonour is equivalent to death; he would not like to live on after dishonour has tainted him. Noble beings die of shame, as deer short of their hair die. The world will honour the man who refuses to live on after he has been dishonoured.

Does this convey a sense of suicide being right in certain cases? It might relate to the Jaina idea leading to *sallekhanā* in the face of dishonour. Continuing the thought in another chapter on Being Ashamed of Unworthiness, the poet offers us some comments that are worth repeating, trying to show they are of Jaina origin, if they can be traced back at all. True shame is that which is ashmed of unworthy acts. The highborn have shame as a shield; they will not exchange it for all the world. Virtue itself will blush not at things which make others blush with shame. A wooden doll moved by strings stimulate life; a man who has no touchy conscience might have movements but has no real life.

I have quoted extensively, sometimes even repeated, some verses and chapters from the *Kural* text on various topics and tried to suggest in this chapter, the feeling that one gets that whatever the theme developed, the poet was working with ideas that were largely not irreconciliable to the Jaina way, if not derived from the ideas of life according to Jaina doctrines of morality.

We can prove that he was drawing largely upon the Jaina literature of morality that was available to him in his days. He might have drawn from Jaina folklore and legend but his is one of the earliest literary work in the Tamil language if we accept the grammar by *Tolkappiyar* who was undoubtedly a Jaina as well as of Tiruvalluvar as pioneers, and no earlier Jaina sources have come down to us of Tamil Jaina usages and nuances in words. All available Jaina work in Tamil came after *Kural*. So that it becomes difficult to find positive evidence of Jaina technical or verbal usage in the text, except by a sort of large implication.

Speculative inference can however suggest that Tiruvalluvar was drawing many of his metaphors and similes and usage from

Jaina lore but it can certainly be asserted that his moral sense, a sense of humanism, is certainly Jaina in origin; it contradicts Jaina concepts at no level in theory or practical application, while quite a few ideas like *ahiṁsā*, *karman* etc. are positively identifiable as Jaina.

II

To call Tiruvalluvar a moral philsopher would be wrong. He had no ambition of writing or giving birth to a systematic lofty moral treatise. He was, though only poetically, interested "in piercing a mustard seed and putting the seven seas and their waters in it, he was not interested in metaphysical or spiritual specuations, or even larger issues of ethics, except in the personal practical life of the householder who was to be wealthy and active and interested in righteousness to support the Jaina ascetics and monks in their austerities to attain Jinahood.

He was interested in writing a handbook with feet enchained to earthly things, like the domestic life, the life that he might be called upon to lead in the city or village conforming to his social norms aiding the economy of living as best he might in spreading a practical knowledge of the right path among the laymen and in sharing his wealth with the worthy, and cultivating wisdom and practising the arts and crafts allowed him by his religion and social inclinations and status.

But daily practices apart, what was the end and aim of life? According to Tiruvalluvar, the objective of having a good wife, worthwhile offspring, a domestic atmosphere, making wealth and the sharing of it with the needy ones, not by any means neglecting life amibtions and objectives of living.

At a slightly higher level, one might desire friends of the right kind, the welfare of fellow men who inhabit the earth at the same time and good rain and good soil for the raising of crops in a land ruled by justice. Avoiding evil things like covetousness, lustfulness, and avoiding gambling, alcoholic drinks and other acts ostensibly evil are also worthwhile. To achieve fame as a giver with a gift, for giving is worthwhile, so is fame for a righteous man; so is the fame that learnedness or wisdom brings and is the fame of possessing worthwhile offspring and being endowed with a worthy woman as wife.

It is one of the characteristics of Tiruvalluvar that he does not think in terms of high and low even among them; he admits that high birth exists but seeks to define it as conditioned by not caste or birth as such, as by noble, good deeds and judicious giving. His *dharma* or the moral law he gives voice to, are not the Hindu moral laws of caste or community. And no structure of the law differs from Brahmin to Kṣatriya, to Vaiśya, to peasant, to untouchable; all are to obey the same moral law with regard to behaviour, earning wealth and distributing it, learning etc., it is a long *et cetera* of a rich life. In this the poet author of the *Kural* shows himself tarred with the brush of unorthodox views when we consider that the orthodox views on Hindudom stem always from caste and community *dharmas*, each having its own moral codes as defined by Manu and others. It would seem that Valluvar pitched himself against the great law-giver, Manu, and defined moral grandeur in his own terms that are made clear in chapter after chapter of ten verses each. At times the poet's habit of exaggerating the importance of a moral quality might be irritating, for, truth, as well as benevolence, refraining from drink as from lustfulness, pursuing nobility as well as wealth, are all defined as great; it might be an irritating habit but it is obvious that each in its place is great and necessary indeed. It is this recognition of even greatness in trifling things that the *Kural* poet emphasized a truly Jaina spirit of humanisim, putting it against the hierachical good evolved by caste ridden Hinduism.

Chapter 98 of the *Kural* deals with greatness and greatness as a human desire:

1. A desire of great achievement is itself greatness; the desire to live without achieving anything is smallness indeed.
2. Birth is the same for all; men become distinguished by their actions in their lives.
3. The high, even not high, may not be high; the low, even when low, may not be low.
4. Like a woman's virtue, greatness belongs to himself who guards himself.
5. That man is truly great who can do rare and great things.

6. The base among men do not desire the company of great men and carefully avoid partaking of their nature.
7. Distinctions won by little men make them haughty and insolent.
8. Great men can be humble; it is the small who indulge in self praise.
9. True greatness is free from pride; littleness carries pride to its extreme limits.
10. Great persons will not make much of the faults of others; little persons will insist on proclaiming them.

There are quite a number of ideas of Jaina origin in this chapter on greatness, the foremost among them being the denial of greatness or distinction by birth, and asserting that all of us are born the same; we win distinction by the actions of our lives (verse 2) and again in verses 7 and 8 equating greatness as humility itself. The ideas are refreshingly simple and geared to a practicality that suggests a Jaina utilitarian purpose to the whole.

The Hindu doctrinire approach might have asserted the same things but would have lost itself in spiritual, other-worldly, speculations or indulged in ideas of "noble birth".

The Buddhist would have got involved in metaphysical circumlocution.

Tiruvalluvar is simply direct and practical, to give him his due. Simplicity, directness and practical utility were some of the viriues he aimed at, consciously, deriving then from Jaina life.

Purity is one of the great virtues and moralities which Jainism advocated. The author of the *Kural* has a chapter of ten verses on Purity in Action, which might give us some idea of how interested the Jainas were on the virtue of purity in action. He was ostensibly talking of the ruler but what he says will be common to commoners as well as to rulers.

1. Having friends gives one strength; purity of action brings one all that one desires.
2. One should avoid for all time, acts that bring one no fame or credit or good.
3. One who wants to be considered noble should avoid acts that would sully one's name.

4. Those who have acquired unshakeable knowledge will never do wrong even in times of trouble.
5. No person should do acts which he will regret later; if he has to do such acts, it is better not to regret them.
6. Even if it means starving your mother, do not do things which the pure would find fault with.
7. To have acquired great wealth by disreputable, impure means is worse indeed than being pure and suffering poverty.
8. The success achieved by impure deeds will surely lead to sorrow.
9. Things won by making others weep will vanish even with the tears of those whom you defrauded; good deeds, even if they bring immediate loss, will recompense you later.
10. To heap up wealth by unfair means is like trying to fill an unbaked mudpot with water.

Tiruvalluvar's instances of abstract ideas by referring them often to daily economics stamps him a Jaina at least in his ways of thinking. And how refreshing is the simile of trying to fill an unbaked mudpot with water!

Seeking perfection is a human trait and a moral code that suggests a seeking of perfection should be considered both idealistic and practicable. The poet of the *Kural* tries to set out briefly the shades of perfection that come under his purview as a moralist. It has Jaina overtones, this perfection as much as anything else that the poet laid down as a moral law or code of conduct for the worldly man living as an ordinary householder earning wealth, spending it in satisfactory ways, raising a family, feeding his guests and revering the ascetics. And the poet's own words in this as in other things are more important than any commentary, or any learned expatiation thereon, for Tiruvalluvar says the most difficult things with a clarity and simplicity and a vigour of expression that drive the sentiment and idea home even to the careless reader.

The Chapter on Seeking Perfection the 99th chapter, in the *Kural* is:

1. He who knows what is right, and desires perfection, to him all good things are natural say those who know.

2. Goodness of character is the only good for a man seeking perfection; all other good is not so good.
3. Perfection has five adjuncts supporting it; love, humility, beneficence, grace and truthfulness. There is no perfection lacking one of these.
4. Not killing is true penance; real perfection lies in not taking note of other's faults.
5. Humility is the strength of perfection; it will bring down all enemies.
6. He who accepts defeat when defeated by an inferior, as he accepts defeat at the hand of a superior, shows perfection.
7. To do good even to those who do him evil, is the nature of the seeker of perfection. What good is perfection, if he does not do thus?
8. Loss of wealth is no disgrace to a person if he has perfection and nobility of character,
9. Though time and circumstances change, those who rest on perfection do not change.
10. If the perfection of perfect men decreases in the world the earth will collapse under the weight of men.

The poet places chief among the qualities of perfection love, beneficence, grace, humility and truthfulness. That, love heads the list and love is defined as "doing no harm to any living thing and wishing all of them well", otherwise you are only bone covered by skin, not a man argues that Tiruvalluvar was basing his ethics on the familiar Jaina code. In the very next verse he says that "non-killing is the only penance"; the only perfection in human behaviour comes from not taking note of others' faults, pointing them out and thus hurting others. The idea in the seventh verse which says that to do good even to those who do him evil has been reiterated many times in the *Kural*. That perfection consists in being rooted in your ideas, principles, character and general equanimity is hinted at by verse nine where the man seeking perfection is said to change not with changing circumstances or times. And the balance of the world and worldly things is achieved by the weight of perfection of perfect men—proving that right conduct is what makes the world itself exist!

CHAPEER XII

On Love Life

There are those among the Tamils who consider that the 25 chapters or 250 *kurals* comprising the third book of the *Tiruk-kural,* dealing with the love life, and entitled Kāmathuppāl shows the poet in his best form. While there are also others who think that, in this chapter, the great moralist of the previous chapters and the better part of the book, is at his tamest, with a conformist attitude subscribing to the conventions of the *aham* poems, i.e. love poems, the interior landscape of lovers, according to A.K. Ramanujam, introduced into Tamil by the grammarian Tolkappiyar and practised by the *Saṅgam* poems, perhaps following Tiruvalluvar conceding that he lived in the first century A.D. before the *Saṅgam* poetry came into being.

Though largely conventional, and to a great extent conformist, the poems or verses cannot be dismissed as poetry by another or lesser hand for the poems show a great insight into love, and human situations that surprise a modern reader by their very modernity. The poet has described domestic virtues in a good wife in the first book of the *Kural.* But here in the third book he deals with the other sex as only objects of love. The Tamil convention allowed premarital sex and the meeting of lovers without the knowledge of parents and suiting his poems to the situations, prescribed by the convention, the poet describes love "as a great motivating force", not as a moral force as he did in the two previous books, but all-encompassing in the circumstances of the lover and the beloved.

The author of the *Kural* devotes a chapter on The Good Wife in his first book which is worth quoting in full as it shows the spirit in which the helpmate of the moral householder makes his full life possible. She has to live within her husband's means, first of all; she should be companionable and helpful in what-

ever the householder attempts to do, including his obligation of speeding the passing guest and welcoming the coming one. The wife in the house has a duty towards the guest of the house in that she has not to show a wry face lest it should spoil the mood of the guest who is like the flower which withers as soon as you smell it and also to increase the worth both of the giver and the receiver. And it is, above all, the duty of the good wife to order things so that nature does not make a victim of man; she has to protect her virtue and think of no one else even if he be God. The man who has a good wife at home can hold his head high in the company of men and attend to his other work duly conscious that the house and household affairs are taken care of by his worthy partner, his wife. The whole might be found fault with as male-oriented but India, and within it the Jaina world was a world dominated by the male and his interests and pursuits, so it was quite in the aptness of things that the good wife was thought of only in relation to her husband.

1. She is the best partner in life who has all the wifely qualities, and lives within her husband's means.
2. She who lacks skill in domestic management lacks every thing and is a shame, however dignified or beautiful otherwise.
3. The house which has a good wife in it will lack for nothing. If the wife lack the virtues, what use will a man's family life be?
4. What can be better than a virtuous wife in the house of a family man!
5. She who knows no other god but her husband and thinks of him from the moment of her waking up in the day, if she bid the rain fall, it certainly will.
6. She is truly the good wife who ever guards her virtue and reputation and is always in attendance on her husband.
7. The impenetrable fence which protects a wife, is her own virtue; no other fence can safeguard her as well.
8. Wives who win glory among mortals as caring well for their husband will win greater glory in heaven.
9. The hubsand of a nonvirtuous woman cannot walk upright before his detractors.

10. A good wife is a blessing in the house and good children are precious ornaments.

Tiruvalluvar, in the course of the book, the *Kural*, deals with quite a number of virtues and vices relevant to man's relationship with woman; he instructs the rulers and others to beware of bought women's pleasures, not to be uxorious, or not go hankering after another man's wife and on the wretch who listens to women instead of good reason or moral conscience.

But in his 25 chapters on love life, he is interested in, more or less conforming to a literary convention set up by, or before, or after, Tolkappiyar, practised in the Tamil country with conventions that are literary mainly, but from which quite a number of Tamil scholars have drawn many, and perhaps untainable sociological conclusions. That the poet of the *Kural* deals with insight and almost modernly psychological profundity into the attraction for men of women and vice versa, that it can produce the exhilarating effect it does produce on succeeding generations of human beings.

Love is the one human experience in which transcendence is not possible like in death or birth and it might have no metaphysical soaring points, but it remains one of the glorious prospects and pursuits of human, mental, physical activity. The whole thing can be reduced to mechanical dimensions but can also be presented with psychological insights which might outlast the conventions of the poet's days.

Tiruvalluvar universalizes with great and sure skill a common human experience to which every human might be indebted in regard to certain things to his predecessors in Indian erotic writing like Vātsyāyana (*Kāma-sūtra*) and Manu, but he lifts the whole into a poetic realm that was not in the purview of either Vātsyāyana or Manu or Kauṭilya.

In regard to this theme I cannot do better than quote Prof. A. Chakravarti in his Introduction to Kavirāja Pandithar's commentary on the *Kural*: "In the third section of his book, the author deals with domestic life and happiness, and places before the public an idea of happiness quite different from what is described in *Kāma-sūtra*. A glance at Vātsyāyana's *Kāma-sūtra* will reveal that the third book of *Kural* is quite different in aim

and purpose and that it is devoted mainly to the description of sexual intercourses and the various postures related to sexual intercourse whereas Tiruvalluvar's *Kural* describes the psychology of domestic love in its various stages.

"*His was a society in which marriage was preceded by free* courtship (or free love). A bachelor evidently had opportunities to meet grown up maids in places of public resort. They may meet and talk without the knowledge of parents and develop love between themselves. This is evidently a prolonged period of meetings without the knowledge of the parents on either side. This love in secrecy is dealt with in the first portion of the third book of the *Kural.*

"The feelings, emotions on either side, are described with psychological accuracy which should be surprising to any student of modern psychology. This secrecy of love may not last long and the parents may come to know of the intimacy between the two lovers. There will be a regular legal marriage celebrated and the couple will be permitted to set up a home of their own with the consent of their parents. That is the basis of domestic love, the social unit constituting the ultimate state of householders.

"The psychology of love at this stage is described in detail. But the husband may be called by the State away from home. He may have to go to a foreign place as a military officer or an officer of an embassy. The absence of the husband from home and the consequent deprivation of his company creates an emotional feeling in the wife left at home. Her yearning for the company of her husband, greatly expecting his return every day, his prolonged absence from home, her sufferings due to separation, are all described with scientific accuracy. (I would substitute the word conventional accuracy rather than scientific, or even psychological.)

"Thus the book is a treatise of the psychology of love (perhaps sex?) and thus it is quite different from the gross descriptions of sexual intercourse given in the *Kamā-sūtra.* (The latter too has its finer and psychological and universal human points. Some of the *Kural* editors of an earlier day refused to comment on the Kāmathuppāl as they felt it was gross in comparison with the lofty moral attitude of the earlier text but that is beside the point.)

"Some European students who studied the *Kural,* who are

evidently brought up under a sense of Victorian prudery, were incapable of appreciating the fine findings of the psychology of love contained in this book. Some of them considered the whole book as vulgar and would not translate into English. That only reveals the gross ignorance of the real foundation of domestic happiness and the psychological variations of domestic love.

"Thus in short we may make bold to state that here in this work we have emphatic reactions against the three elements of Vedic culture of *dharma, artha* and *kāma*. As against these three the author of *Kural* presents to the world a new form of *artha* and a new form of *kāma*, all based upon the culture and civilization of the South, formally resting upon the principle of universal love or *ahiṁsā*."

Prof. A. Chakravarti's words notwithstanding, it is difficult to reconcile realities with the form of love presented so conventionally in this, the third book of the *Kural*. If we accept the presentation of free premarital love as real and obtaining in some communities in the South, the question raises more problems than can be answered.

Premarital love and meetings cannot always lead to marriage and domestic life; there should have been enough cases where parents did not acquiesce in the marriage of two lovers; in a few cases, the man or the woman might have been quite fickle. And, the parting was often due not for purposes of war or embassy or trade but quite materially due to the man courting a courtesan, or gone away making money or in search of wealth. The convention does ta˙e note of these things and even talks of suicide in case of one sided, or unrequited, love, but not in the *Kural*.

It is a sort of beautiful and acceptable convention and within the limits offered to him by these poetic conventions the poet does try to make great poetry. And it is more as poetry and conventional poetry than as moralistic or as descriptive of sociological conditions prevailing that we should approach this, the third book of the *Kural*. As poetry some of it is great.

And it is as sublime poetry that we should approach the third book of the *Kural*, than as ground work for a universal, or even Jaina, frame work of morality and human behaviour. I shall briefly glance at some of the characters and verses in these 25 chapters of ten *kurals* each.

Physical love, or what we call sex, is the same for every one,

Jaina, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, or other, except that the social setting for the exercise of that sex is limited by society in various ways. Sex is one act which has not become a cliche in actual fact and the risk of it becoming a cliche in literature is prevented, or avoided. by adopting various, little, recognizable, conventions.

The Tamils of the pre-*Saṅgam* and *Saṅgam* age adopted a convention close to Nature in the lover seeing the beloved in a natural setting, wondering whether she is goddess or maiden and finding by signs that she is a maiden and desirable, begins boldly to solicit her love. The seduction is mutual.

The premarital convention requires that the sex and meetings between lover and beloved should be secret beset with danger of discovery, and if discovered, of alarming consequences. By convention, the only friends of the lovers are a *sakhī* or friend of the loved one, her foster mother from whom nothing can be hidden and sometimes a male messenger, usually a Brahmin boy, put out for eats, starved and full of words. Meeting, parting, promising and not coming, and when come, met with feigned disdain, sweet postponment of coitus so that the pleasure might increase by the delay, these are further conventions to heighten the psychological effects of the love.

It is in this context, that these poems should be read, and within these contexts and limits, the poet of the *Kural* is capable of compressing human experience into as few words as possible, and often he succeeds in evoking a sort of wisdom that is recognizable.

To seek specific Jaina traits in this universal business of love and sex would be both absurd and impossible, except that the poet nowhere suggests as do more modern writers on sex, immoral, or permissive, or even lax, attitudes.

The 109th chapter of the *Kural* which begins book three of the book, begins with the theme of the-lover-first-seeing-the maid. And wondering whether it were the daughter of a divine being, or a peacock, or just a maiden, wearing heavy eardrops. He is not able to make up his mind. But soon this charming maiden returning his looks seems to have come as an army to wage battle with him. He experiences death, her eyes being the nonfatal killers. Her eyes are theme for a few verses. But she fights unfair; no longer does she look than she vanqishes. Headi-

ness is produced by drinking toddy, but her mere look produces a headiness that overcomes.

The next chapter is about coming to an understanding. True lovers look at each other, as if they had just met. When eye meets eye what use are words?

The third chapter straightaway deals with coitus, the physical consummation of all such love. Delightful to lovers is the close embrace that allows not even air to come between them. Lovers' quarrels, reconciliation, and coitus are the delights of those who marry for love. Every time, I embrace her, so thinks the lover—she who wears so many jewels, every time I embrace her I enjoy fresh delights, like a learned man discarding his old ignorance.

The fourth chapter is given over to a description of her charms. Her arms are like bamboos; her complexion is like the tender sprouts of plants; her teeth are pearls; her body has a natural savour and flavour; her black eyes are sharp spears.

The stars in the sky are confounded, not being able to distinguish between her face and the moon and shoot out of the sky. Oh moon, I would also love you if you could give me the delights she gives. Oh Moon, you appear before all; she is only for me.

The sixth chapter describes love, all in praise of it, from both the hero's and the heroine's angle. I live when I am with her, I am dead when I am not with her, he says. She says, he dwells within me and never leaves me alone, but the village folk, my neighbours, not being able to see him, say that he is cruel and has left me. A bold conceit that brings the beloved in the setting of her community and neighbours.

The sixth chapter seeks to proclaim love to the whole world, instead of keeping it secret, whatever the consequences. The next deals with the intimation that the public has of that secret love. The more he drinks the toddy the drinker desires more of toddy; and loves gossip, seeks ever more new subjects, now we have become the objects of public scandal. It only increases my love for her. But to try to end love by gossiping about me is like putting out fire by pouring oil on it!

The next chapter takes up the theme of parting, after having come together in coitus. It is the maid speaking when she says, he made love to me, and said, 'be not afraid'. Now he is leaving me. How can I put my trust in him? He is cruel and insists on

talking of parting. I am lost, I cannot hope for mercy from him. Fire can only burn you when you touch it; can it burn, as love does at departed lover?

The parting of lovers. She has emaciated and gone pale, the girl who has had her experience of love and longs for more of it. Love is like the unfathomable sea when it gives delight, but the pang of parting is deeper than the sea. The night, she bewails conventionally, is long and drags on; it is more cruel to me than even his parting from me. The lover might be far away, even in another country, but the eyes of the beloved seek to see him wherever he might be. Oh! I am glad that these eyes which brought me the sickness and grief called love are themselves weeping and suffering. He is somewhere sure, but my eyes seeing him not, weep evermore.

The separation of lover from beloved induces conventionally a pallor in the beloved; a whole chapter of ten verses is devoted to it. I consented to part from him, hoping that he does, I shall not mind this temporary pallor of mine.

Playing the game of he-loves-me he loves me not in my absence, the beloved reflects on loneliness. I find that the love of the lover is like rain at night, it is welcome. The pride of loneliness comes only to those who love well and truly. He loves me wholly but what else can he do to love me more, she asks herself, and cannot find a reply. Though my lover sends me no word, it is sweet to hear of him being talked of by others, connecting him with me, thus does my love feed on itself.

The joys of living when the lover is away consist of remembering things past. I look at you on Moon on the horizon as he might be just looking at you now, from wherever he is. He still abides with me, however far away he might be.

She tells herself of the dreams she might cultivate of him. With what words of joy shall I welcome dreams of him which come with a message from my lover. The dream itself is the message. He plagues me in my dreams; he has no compassion in my waking hours either. And only those who do not see their lovers in their dreams will blame them for not visiting them.

In each of these chapters, the village folk are brought in, either blaming the lover for his absence leaving her lonely, or the beloved for being fond of a useless fellow. Every dusk is hateful for it presages the lonely loverless night, long and

dreary. I am not dead but indeed it is as if I were dead. With long parting, the beloved loses the beauty of her limbs as is natural; she is anguished and time is passing. In both these situations both lover and beloved speak not by turns or even a half of ten verses each, but in some unspecified incalculable order.

She speaks to herself, giving advice to her heart. She takes the drastic and shameless step of telling every one of the love. The lover has not parted from her, for earning wealth or anything legitimate, but he has been to a harlot who is full of tricks; he has many weapons for disarming my womanhood, alas! When the heart within me is melting for him, can I resist him even if he do come from his harlot? But one day of longing for my lover is like a long week dragging on.

Other chapters are taken up with guessing games about reunion, on lovers desiring coitus the more, the more the absence of the lover; alternating between addressing her friend and her heart. But when at last the lovers meet after long parting, sweet is sulking, denying temporary pleasure to each other. Psychologically convincing this chapter on sulking might be quite worthwhile but it is succeeded by another chapter on pretending anger in bed which I shall reproduce here.

On Pretending Anger in Bed

1. All women devour you with their eyes and are in love with you; I want to have nothing to do with you!
2. When I was sulking in bed, he sneezed knowing full well that I would say automatically as one says invariably on any one sneezing, 'May you live long.'
3. She is angry, I deck myself with flowers to please her, but she claims that I did it to please another.
4. I told her when in bed with her that I loved her the best. She was angry and asked, "Better than whom? And who is she?"
5. When I told her that I would not part from her in this life she got angry asking, "Then you would part with me in the next life, would you?"
6. I said that I had remembered her but she flared up in anger, "You forgot me and then remembered me. How could you forget?"

7. I sneezed in bed and she demanded in anger, "You remember someone and sneeze. Tell me truly, whom you remembered."
8. I refrained from sneezing and she took me to task saying, "You avoid sneezing so that you betray that you are thinking of someone else."
9. I try to caress her in a new way and she retorts in anger "With whom did you first practise this caress so that you have it so perfect?"
10. I gaze at her in love and enjoying her charms, but she chides me saying, "You are mutely comparing me with someone, are you? Which harlot of your are you comparing me silently with?"

The first two verses are by the beloved the rest are the sayings of the lover. But it talks volumes of the relationship of lover to beloved at intimate moments of love, and anger and in the intimacy of bed. The last chapter tells of how lovers enjoy sulking with each other: my husband is free of faults thinks the beloved, but I feign dislike of his embrace and sulk just for increasing the delight. Sulking adds sweetness to love, the charming fact about sulking is that it always ends in delightful coitus.

In Conclusion

I cannot conclude this study of the *Kural* as a work of a Jaina author variously named as Thevar or Tiruvalluvar, except by quoting in full the concluding portions of the Introduction which Prof. A. Chakravarti wrote to his edition of the Tamil commentary on the *Tirukkural* by Kavirāja Pandithar. I have quoted extensively from it but find that the concluding part also might be quoted here with profit.

Quite a few of the most eminent scholars in Tamil with unbiassed minds have acknowledged the fact that the author of *Tirukkural* was undoubtedly a Jaina. Among them were V. Kanagasabai, Tiru Vi Kalyanasundara Mudaliar and that meticulous scholar S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, though the last named pushed the *Kural* forward in time to the sixth century A.D. trying to settle the date by the use of words and word endings and compound words and hybrids in the text.

But Chakravarti made extensive studies and acknowledging the extant Jaina tradition claiming the *Kural* as the work of Śrī Kundakunda Ācārya known by his other name Elācārya; he dates him back to the first century and, alone among Tamil researchers, has tried to locate the ruler whom Tiruvalluvar was addressing in his extensive sections on rulers, ministers, statecraft, etc. and public administration. No other identification has even been tried so far. We may not accept the identities of the ruler as wholly established for we have no other evidence to confirm it but the identification of the poet of the *Kural* with Śrī Kundakunda Ācārya is quite beliefworthy, for it takes its origion from the Jaina tradition. Later Jaina writings in Tamil have looked up the *Kural*, as belonging to their early tradition. The text of the *Kural* itself, with its emphasis on *ahimsā*, asceticism and the operation of *karman* seems to indicate, as I have suggested by judicious somewhat repetitive quotations with

comments about a completely Jaina origin, indicating a Jaina ambience.

Jaina texts of earlier times purporting to advise laymen in their lives in the material world are not unknown. In one tradition, Śrī Kundakunda has himself been considered an author of such a book; it might well have been in Tamil. I have come across an account about Samanta-bhadra's book for the guidance of laymen which the authorities place in the third century. One would wish to know more about these texts than I at present know, to afford my offering any opinion as to whether Tiruvalluvar had any influence on the writings of such later moralists trying to influence lay men's lives. It can however be taken for granted that though the author of the *Kural* was not intolerant of any religion or system and was emphatically not a bigot, he was undoubtedly of Jaina persuasion as he wants you to understand by his first chapter of ten verses, talking of God in Jaina terms reserved for such matters. There can be no gainsaying that argument, nor the Jaina Invocation.

As against the strict principle of *ahiṁsā* in religion and humanism in social matters (that prevailed in Tamilnadu at the time of Valluvar and before him) the immigrant culture from the North brought the religion of animal sacrifice which was the central doctrine of Āryanism as well as the *varṇ-āśrama-dharma.*

Secondly, against the casteless social organisation of the Tamils, Vedic culture introduced *varṇāś-rama-dharma* and interpreted this *dharma* according to different castes assigning the occupation of agriculture of the fourth and lowest caste of Śūdra. No person of the upper class should be engaged in this, the meanest of professions. This must have been felt as an insult by all those engaged in this, the "meanest" of professions. This must have been an intolerable insult to Tamil culture and hence the author might have felt a justifiable revolt against this attitude that agriculture was the meanest of profession.

In social habits also he must have felt similar rebellion. In the *Dharma-śāstra* associated with Bodhāyana, there is a chapter on entertaining guests which is known as offering *madhuparka*. In that chapter, there is a list of about 25 animals and birds given as fit for the consumption of guests. If the guest is an honoured one, the host is advised to prepare meat of different

kinds from different animals; and the number and kind of meat preparations should be reduced, if the status of the guest was less. The thought of killing animals from the cow to the wild bear, 25 kinds of animals, in order to entertain a guest in a household would have been shocking to an individual brought up on the tradition of *ahiṁsā*.

Hence the author revolts against the practice very much and he compares the stomachs of meat-eaters to the graveyards of the animals that are slain. Thus an unbiassed view of the work will clearly reveal the truth that the author whose object was indirectly to condemn the ideals of Vadic culture and restore confidence in the people in their own *ahiṁsā-dharma*.

One need not subscribe to this theory of propaganda for *ahiṁsā* merely to grant that the author of the *Kural* was a Jaina. *Ahiṁsā* and the doctrines of higher morality are not matter of propaganda but of *dharmic* significance. They can only be in a minority or elite culture; the more we progress into modernity as no doubt the recent experiments with *ahiṁśa*, both of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, have proved to us. And the poet of the *Kural* was more interested in the role of *dharma*, a role for itself in society without being interested in his propagandic value towards one part of it.

But such considerations need not vititate Prof. Chakravarti's arguments which are based on Tamil reactions to the obviously true statement that Tiruvalluvar was a Jaina and hence no propagandist. As we might consider the Saint, whose ideas matter which have a place in a consideration of *Tirukkrual* as a Jaina text.

Hence he completely throws overboard concept of *dharma* based on *varṇ-āśrama*. He adopts a purely humanistic attitude. Human personality as such is the most important factor in society. Between man and man there can be no distinction by birth. Man is born the same but achieves different things, asserts the poet. Differences amongst men found in society are entirely due to occupation and environment and their own past doings.

He must have held in the matter of social politics like Rousseau, several centuries later, that man is born free and equal and he is found in chains everywhere. He recognized only two groups in society the ascetics and the laymen house-

holder. The householder must be engaged in the occupation of production, distribution and defence. The mainstay of social sustenance is food production. Without agriculture social economy will crumble to dust. Hence he considers that agriculture is the noblest profession and the rest being subsidiary to this noble occupation.

The homeless ascetic, though he renounces all attachment to life, is expected to devote his time and leisure not only for the purpose of self-purification and self-development, but he is expected also to place all his intellectual and spiritual resources at the services of society at large.

Since the author recognized only these two groups in society, he formulated an ethical code for each of these groups, one relating to the moral life of the laymen and other relating to the moral life of the ascetic. These moral principles are based on eternal ethical values and not designed to suit accidents of birth or time. It appears, to be an unbiassed student, to be a noble effort to save *ahiṁsā* culture and civilisation from being victimised by the Vedic culture resting on *varn-āśrma dharma* and emphasizing animal sacrifice.

Similarly the student will be able to find fundamental difference between the two attitudes in the matter of statecraft and general finance though it resembles in many points the *Artha-śāstra* of Kauṭilya, the *Kural* must be considered to be fundamentally different from it.

This difference is obvious when the author deals with matters of finance. In Kauṭilya's *Artha-śāstra*, there are two important sources of revenue mentioned, *apakārya* revenue and the revenue derived from taxing dancing girls. The chief of the department of dancing girls is expected to select a beautiful and accomplished dancer to be appointed as the court dancer.

In these two respects, our author's view is different. He is for condemning these sources of revenue. He must have had an ideal of society free from drink habits. He also condemns the State encouraging the habit of drinking liqour in order to derive revenue from it. He condemns the habit of drinking in general.

Similarly, he warns public servants and state officials not to have anything to do with public women who sell for money their body's pleasures. To be allured by beautiful dancing girls

will only lead to corrupt practice of state affairs. This warning is given not only to state officials but to all people in general. To maintain high and respectable standard of life, one should avoid drinks and prostitutes. In the third section the author deals with love and domestic happiness.

Thus, in short, we may make bold to state that here, in this work, we have emphatic reactions against the three elements of Vedic culture of *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*. As against these three, the author presents to the world a new form of *artha* and a new form of *kāma*, all based upon the culture and civilization of the South, formally resting upon the principle of universal love or *ahiṁsā*.

II

Looked at in this manner the attempt of the poet of the *Kural* would be narrowed down to the propaganda against a culture and the upholding of a given culture prevailing. Whatever the differences between the rival approaches, there is something moral and universal about one or the other thing, though each might have its own contribution to make to humanity.

To look upon the *Kural* as a document upholding a moral order of the world based upon *ahiṁsā* or universal love, would be the more profitable thing, irrespective and independent of their contemporary rivalry with other *dhramas*, factions, religionists. The mere fact that the author of the *Kural*, in spite of being obviously recognizable as a Jaina, is claimed by so many sects of different kinds, is evidence that, as a poet, his message has gone down to large segments of the people of whatever religious persuasions and that the poet has held his own against time and rival factions of different ages as well. What matters is that his message gets through and that message is recognizable as an eternal and essential Jaina message of love for all living beings.

III

A final section of Prof. A. Chakravarti's Introduction puts the matter in the right perspective and I hasten to quote from it here.

What is the religious ideal presented by the *Kural*? What is its conception of divinity? What is the economic and social ideal offered by the *Kural*? When we attend to these problems, we find surprisingly ideals incompatible with ideals presented elsewhere.

The god of *Kural* is the god of universal benevolence. He is different from the god of wrath. He is not a god who showers fire and brimstone to destroy the cities of the enemies. He is not the god who will send forth flames of destruction from his eyes in order to burn the cities of hostiles to ashes. He does not carry weapons of warfare in his hands. His nature is the manifestation of universal love.

He has no friends as his chosen people and he has no hostile people, either. He knows no friend or foe and the only weapon he wields is the weapon of universal love. This weapon of universal love will tame even the cruel nature of a tiger. All hostility will get liquidated in the presence of universal benevolence.

This god of *Kural* is very intimately associated with the noblest and highest nature of human personality. Man is a curious mixture of god and beast. The animal nature in him is responsible for his destructive emotions of hatred, anger and cruelty. This animal nature is completely destroyed. The divine in man is given scope to manifest. The old Adam in man is crucified in order to glorify the Christ in him. Such a god does not require any sacrifice, involving bloodshed. It was this divine personality represented in the *Kural* that reigns supreme in south India for several centuries. People worship him by offering flowers at his feet. The Cera king, Senguttuvan, is praised by the Brahmin Matara for having introduced this form of worship by offering flowers instead of sacrifices.

When we turn to the picture of social, economic organization presented by the *Kural* we similarly find extremely noble and modern ideas without the defects of modern ideology. We already mentioned that the society then consisted of only two groups of people, the laymen and the ascetics.

The layman is expected not only to live for himself, but for the whole of society. He is expected to share his food with the others. There should be no poverty in the land (The poet defines that as the good country where no one starves for want of food).

There should be no beggars. The layman is expected to maintain a very high standard of life for himself as well as for others. Nobody should suffer from starvation or be driven to beggary.

Poverty and misery should not be excused as divine ordinance. The author of *Kural* condemns such an attitude mean and ignorant. Cursed be the God, he cries, who created the world of poverty and misery. He throws responsibility for the presence of misery and poverty on human shoulders. The well placed in society are expected to remove this. They are expected to see that nobody suffers from hunger, nobody is in need.

He enjoins upon laymen the need for, and the duty of, acquiring wealth. Wealth is indispensable for maintenance of decent standards of life in society. Man without wealth cannot enjoy the happiness of the world. But wealth must be obtained by just and virtuous means. It should not be acquired by cheating others.

When we turn to the ascetic, we find similar ideal of social service. He may temporarily withdraw from society for the purpose of contemplation. But he must come back to society. He must place his resources at the services of society as a whole. His genius must be the inspiring source for the cultivation of art and science. But for the genius of the holy saint which flourished in an atmosphere of *ahiṁsā* and universal benevolence, how can you explain the magnificent architecture and wonders of south India in the form of temples and wonderful sculptures in the form of iconography?

We have thus in Tamil society, 2000 years ago, noble works of art and culture, religion and ethics, operating for the benefit of mankind, ideals which are not fully appreciated by the modern world in war weariness. In short *Kural* contains ideals which deserve to be spread over not only the whole of India but also over the whole world. Only by living up to these ideals of *ahiṁsā*, universal benevolence, human civilization can be saved, otherwise it will end in destruction by nations waging war with one another which would be the ominous sign of humanity committing suicide. The *Kural* may guide the whole world towards human prosperity and peace.

IV

From time to time, in various climes, in various languages, in various communities, appear literary works that are decidedly

something more than literature. Some of them might be hailed as epics, some as dramas, some as philosaphical treatises, some as simple guides to good living, some as universally valid moral maxims. Two thausand years ago in a Jaina community appeared a saint whose name is variously given as Tiruvalluvar, Thevar or Elācārya or Śrī Kundakunda. He put together, in somewhat proverbial terse form, the wisdom he had gleaned from reading, from his own life observations and experience.

His Jaina birth and training perhaps helped him in the formulation of *a camplete moral code* for man which has something of a recognizable universality in it. While the rest of humanity was experimenting with violence, as befitted a Jaina, he was tempted to make a bid for raising his moral mansion on *ahiṁsā* in all its total aspects. The wonder of it is that the more you read the *Kural*, the more its maxims seem most fitted for life today and here. It does not matter, if he was a glory of south India, or of Tamil, or belonged to this sect or that. All that does not really matter. In fact, it does not matter except to the scholar, what the age in which he actually lived or what his religious beliefs were. Here, behold, was a man who rose above historical times and circumstances to proclaim a practical code of conduct for their daily life; any man in whatever station in life can practise what he proclaimed with facility.

The maxims number only 1330 but they seem to rise to any occasion you can confront it with. Positive living? Yes. Fruitful living? Yes. Effective living? Yes. Making the most of life? Yes. Enjoying the making of wealth and the use of it? Yes. It is a convenient handbook to which you can turn to whenever you want and derive the full benefit of it, for better immediate living. It is rarely that great moralists make great writers.

But in the case of the poet of the *Kurul*, it happens that he is, and has to be considered, one of the greatest of poets who have lived and enriched the world but who also have been one of the ablest moralists, preaching not at you but taking you along the right way, by right knowledge, through right action, which also happens to be the only good.

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Errata

Page	*Line*	*Incorrect*	*Correct*
19	27	amog	among
36	18	af	of
40	25	jointely	jointly
45	37	Consits	consists
76	20	in	is
77	15	swin	swim
81	4	crossidg	crossing
89	2	poossesses	possesses
97	21	presciption	prescription
		contact	conduct
98	19	meke	make
121	32	throuhg	through
125	22	extremly	extremely
136	11	*hiṁsā*	*ahiṁsā*
139	10	desirelss	desireless
142	15	derives	desires
148	25	week	weak
155	7	creater	greater
158	23	warldliness	worldliness
160	1	aquised	aquired
	30	Vanguished	vanquished
166	18	must	most
176	37	its	is
177	29	liquidations	liquidation
180	11	Jainas	Jaina
186	12	Tke	The
187	24	circumslantiate	circumstantial
189	25	Perfection	Purification
198	20	fruitful	unfruitful
205	19	doctrinire	doctrinal
	26	then	them
206	19	stamps	stamp
209	38	husband	husbands